TARGET FOR DESTRUCTION: EARTH!
EVERYONE KNOWS IT BUT THE MAN OF STEEL!
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
SUPERMAN STARRING IN
ACTION COMICS
HURRY, SUPERMAN! STOP THAT ERUPTING VOLCANO BELOW!
WHAT VOLCANO, LOIS? ALL I SEE IS A QUIET STREET SCENE!
ACTION-PLUS WITH AQUAMAN
WHERE THE ACTION IS!

ROCKETED AS A BABY FROM THE EXPLODING PLANET *KRYPTON*, *KAL-EL* GREW TO MANHOOD ON *EARTH*--WHOSE YELLOW SUN AND LIGHTER GRAVITY GAVE HIM FANTASTIC *SUPER-POWERS!* IN THE CITY OF *METROPOLIS*, HE POSES AS MILD-MANNERED NEWSMAN *CLARK KENT*--BUT BATTLES EVIL ALL OVER *EARTH*--AND *BEYOND*--AS...

SUPERMAN®

Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

MARV WOLFMAN *Writer* / CURT SWAN *penciller* / DAN ADKINS *inker* / BEN ODA *letterer* / G. D'ANGELO *colorist* / JULIUS SCHWARTZ *editor*

DEEPEST SPACE: A BRIGHT, CIRCULAR SHIP HANGS IN THE INKY BLACKNESS AS DEEP-SET NARROW EYES FOCUS ON A TERRIFYING SIGHT...

A SIGHT SO MIND-NUMBING THAT EVEN THE EMERALD-HUED COMPUTER THAT CALLS ITSELF BRAINIAC STARES IN ABJECT HORROR...

BY THE SEVEN CIRCUITS! ANOTHER WORLD--*ABSORBED* INTO THAT EVIL MACHINE I LONG AGO CREATED AND THEN THOUGHT DESTROYED!

AND, WITH EACH PLANETARY DESTRUCTION, MY DEVICE *GROWS* LARGER, EVER LARGER--

--UNTIL IT WILL BE READY TO DECIMATE THE *EARTH* ITSELF!

BEHOLD THE WORLD-EATER WHOSE FEARFUL POWER WILL FORCE EVEN SUPERMAN HIMSELF TO CRY OUT...

I HAVE TWO EYES, BUT I CANNOT SEE!

S-3818

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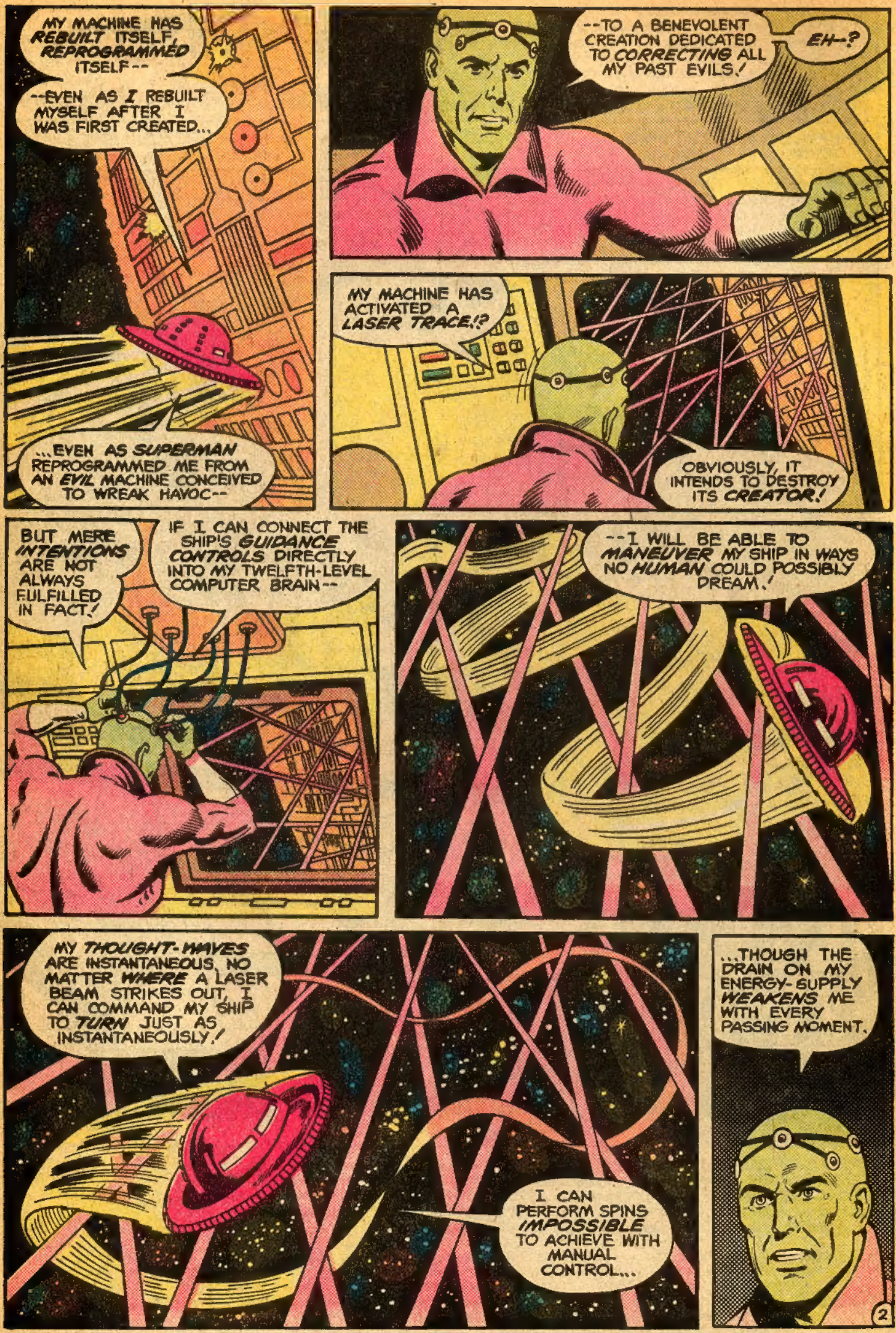
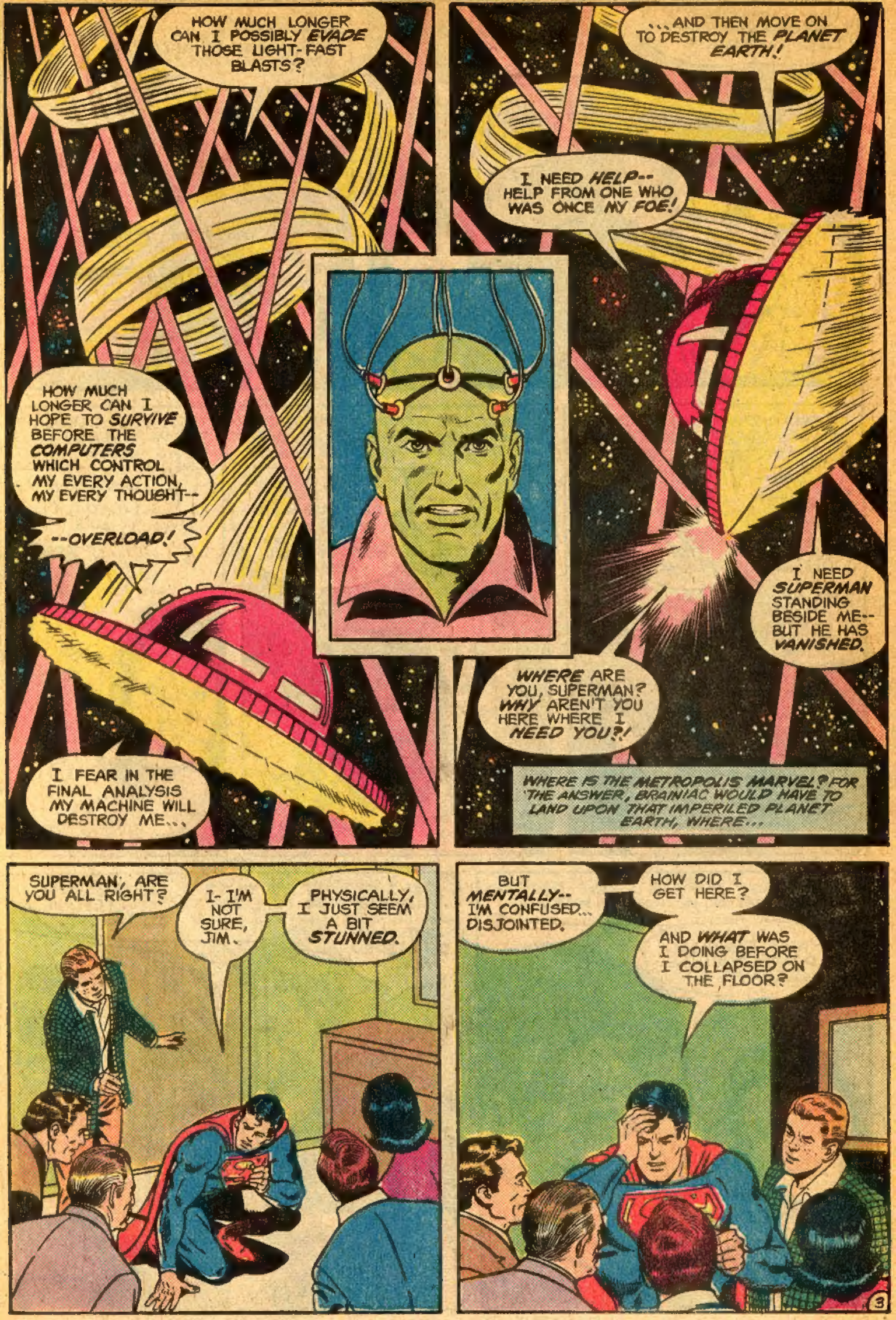
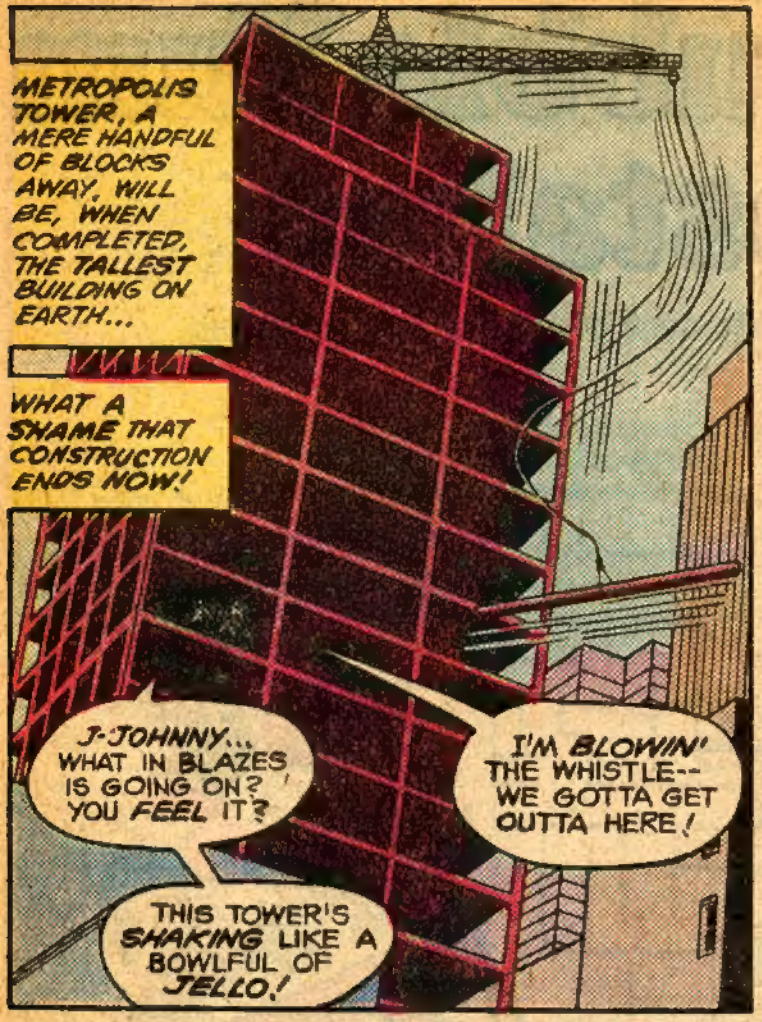
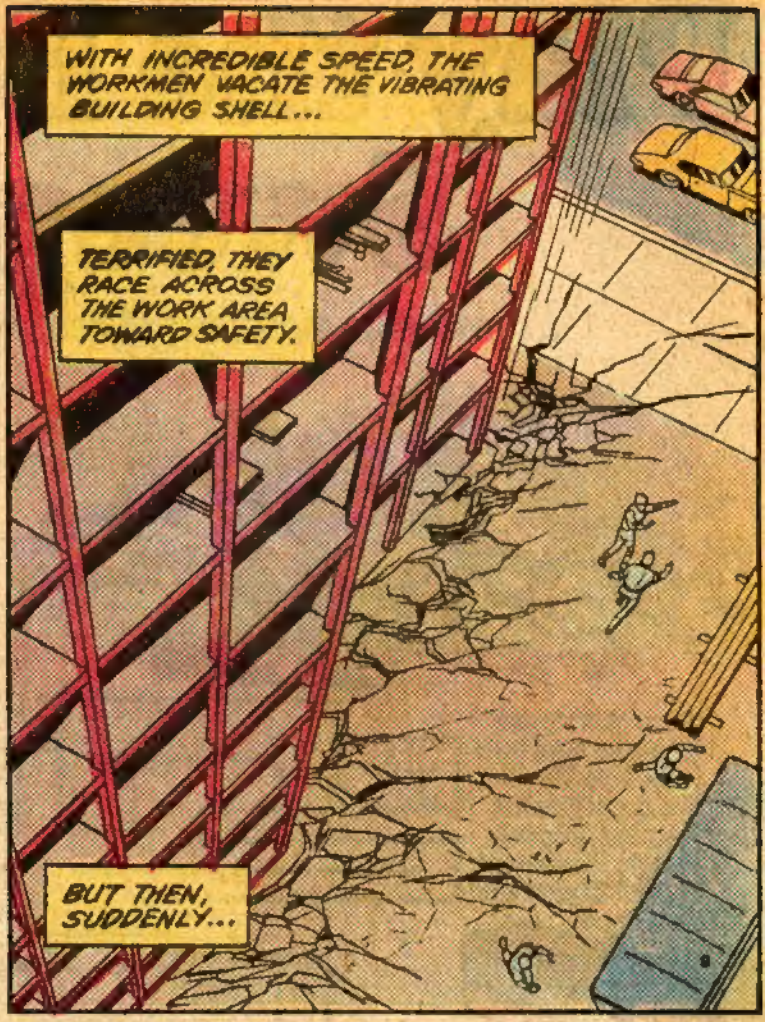
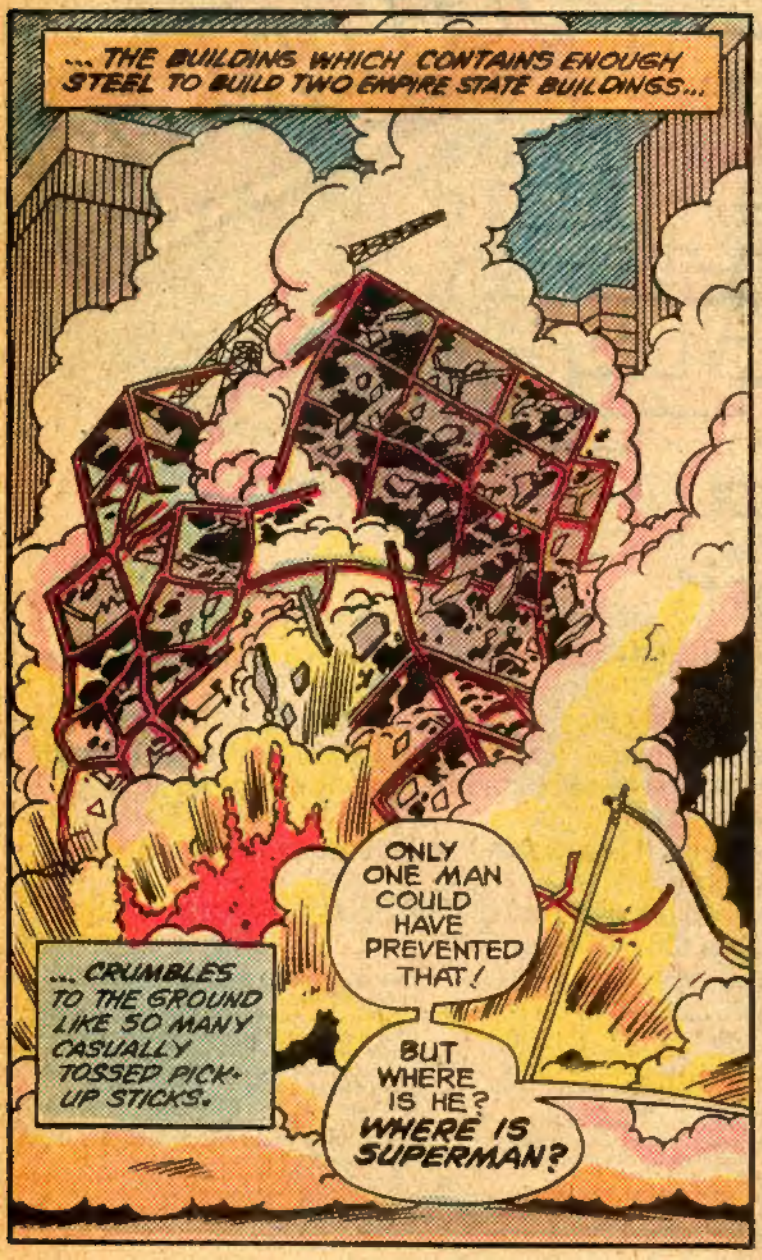

MY MACHINE HAS REBUILT ITSELF, REPROGRAMMED ITSELF--
--EVEN AS I REBUILT MYSELF AFTER I WAS FIRST CREATED...
...EVEN AS SUPERMAN REPROGRAMMED ME FROM AN EVIL MACHINE CONCEIVED TO WREAK HAVOC--
--TO A BENEVOLENT CREATION DEDICATED TO CORRECTING ALL MY PAST EVILS!
EH--?
MY MACHINE HAS ACTIVATED A LASER TRACE!?
OBVIOUSLY, IT INTENDS TO DESTROY ITS CREATOR!
BUT MERE INTENTIONS ARE NOT ALWAYS FULFILLED IN FACT!
IF I CAN CONNECT THE SHIP'S GUIDANCE CONTROLS DIRECTLY INTO MY TWELFTH-LEVEL COMPUTER BRAIN--
--I WILL BE ABLE TO MANEUVER MY SHIP IN WAYS NO HUMAN COULD POSSIBLY DREAM!
MY THOUGHT-WAVES ARE INSTANTANEOUS, NO MATTER WHERE A LASER BEAM STRIKES OUT, I CAN COMMAND MY SHIP TO TURN JUST AS INSTANTANEOUSLY!
I CAN PERFORM SPINS IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE WITH MANUAL CONTROL...
...THOUGH THE DRAIN ON MY ENERGY-SUPPLY WEAKENS ME WITH EVERY PASSING MOMENT.
2

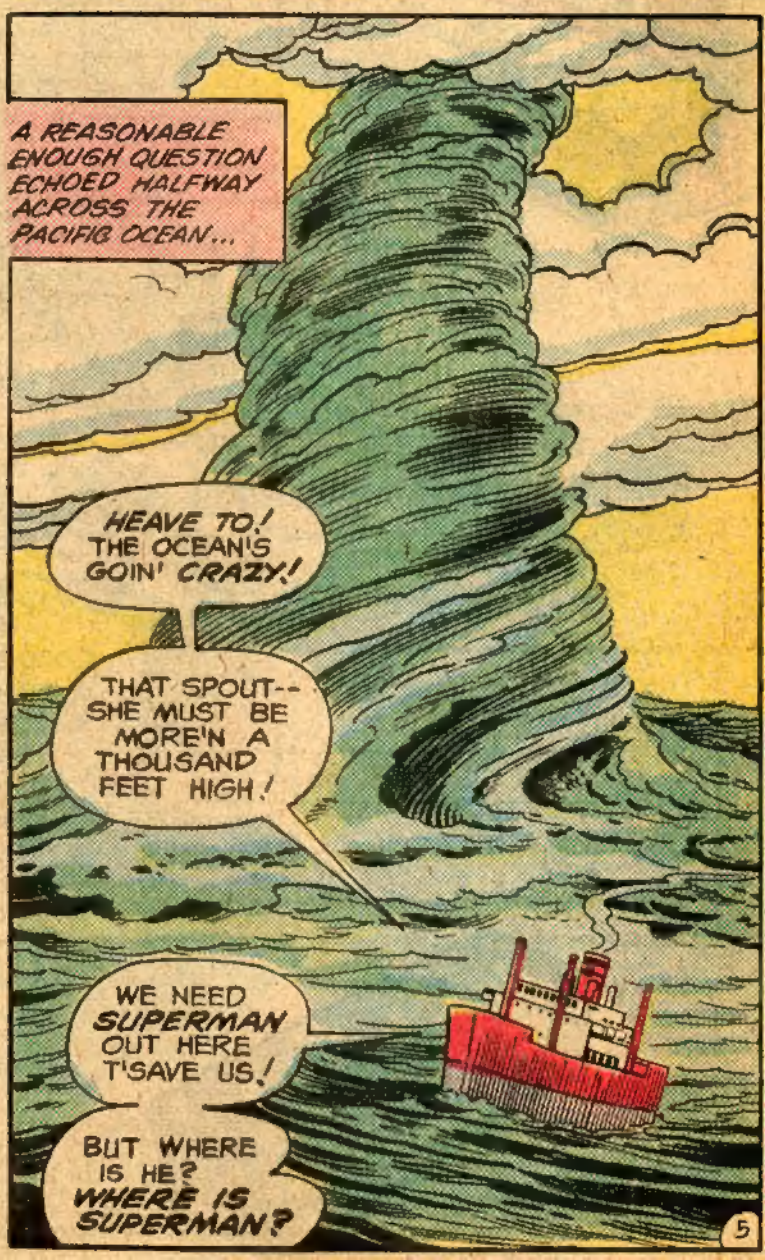

HOW MUCH LONGER CAN I POSSIBLY EVADE THOSE LIGHT-FAST BLASTS?
HOW MUCH LONGER CAN I HOPE TO SURVIVE BEFORE THE COMPUTERS WHICH CONTROL MY EVERY ACTION, MY EVERY THOUGHT--
--OVERLOAD!
I FEAR IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS MY MACHINE WILL DESTROY ME...
...AND THEN MOVE ON TO DESTROY THE PLANET EARTH!
I NEED HELP-- HELP FROM ONE WHO WAS ONCE MY FOE!
I NEED SUPERMAN STANDING BESIDE ME-- BUT HE HAS VANISHED.
WHERE ARE YOU, SUPERMAN? WHY AREN'T YOU HERE WHERE I NEED YOU?!
WHERE IS THE METROPOLIS MARVEL? FOR THE ANSWER, BRAINIAC WOULD HAVE TO LAND UPON THAT IMPERILED PLANET EARTH, WHERE...
SUPERMAN, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I- I'M NOT SURE, JIM.
PHYSICALLY, I JUST SEEM A BIT STUNNED.
BUT MENTALLY-- I'M CONFUSED... DISJOINTED.
HOW DID I GET HERE?
AND WHAT WAS I DOING BEFORE I COLLAPSED ON THE FLOOR?
3

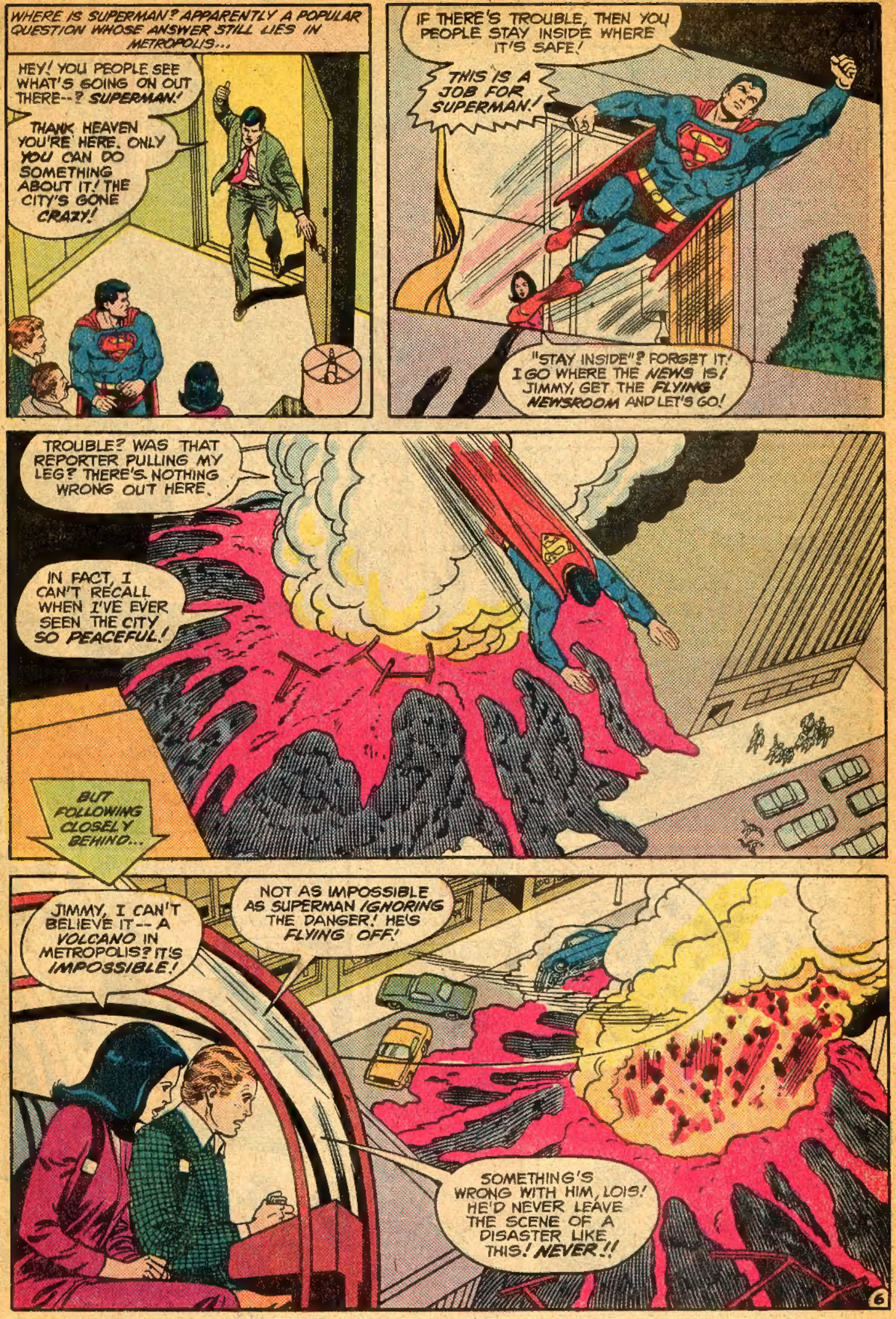
WAS I FIGHTING SOME SUPER-VILLAIN? I DON'T RECALL--
--BUT WHAT ELSE COULD HAVE ERASED MY MEMORY LIKE THIS?
KRYPTONITE? COULD YOU HAVE COME ACROSS SOME IN SPACE?
POSSIBLY, LOIS, BUT MY TELESCOPIC VISION DOESN'T PICK UP ANY "K" ANYWHERE NEARBY.
FRANKLY, FRIENDS, I'M STUMPED. AND THAT WORRIES ME.
BY WHY ARE YOU ALL HERE? IS THIS SOME SORT OF MEETING?
GOSH, SUPERMAN-- WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GALAXY OR SOMETHING?
DON'T YOU KNOW? THIS IS THE END OF THE PLANET!
QUIET, YOU YOUNG WHIPPERSNAPPER! WHAT OLSEN MEANS IS THIS MIGHT BE THE END OF THE DAILY PLANET!
GALAXY CORP IS THINKING OF SELLING US--
--TO THE WAXMAN CHAIN. THEY'LL TURN OUR PAPER INTO A MUCKRAKING SUPERMARKET TABLOID.
SOMEHOW I DON'T THINK THE DAILY PLANET CONCERNS YOU NOW, DOES IT, DARLING?
I'D BE LYING IF I SAID IT DID, LOIS.
I'M REALLY WORRIED. I HAVE THIS ITCHY FEELING THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG--
--THAT I SHOULD BE DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT.
AND I FEEL HELPLESS NOT KNOWING WHAT IT IS I'M NEEDED FOR.
IT'S TERRIBLY FRUSTRATING, LOIS, AND THAT'S A FEELING I'VE NEVER FELT BEFORE.
4


METROPOLIS TOWER, A MERE HANDFUL OF BLOCKS AWAY, WILL BE, WHEN COMPLETED, THE TALLEST BUILDING ON EARTH...
WHAT A SHAME THAT CONSTRUCTION ENDS NOW!
J-JOHNNY... WHAT IN BLAZES IS GOING ON? YOU FEEL IT?
I'M BLOWIN' THE WHISTLE-- WE GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE!
THIS TOWER'S SHAKING LIKE A BOWLFUL OF JELLO!


WITH INCREDIBLE SPEED, THE WORKMEN VACATE THE VIBRATING BUILDING SHELL...
TERRIFIED, THEY RACE ACROSS THE WORK AREA TOWARD SAFETY.
BUT THEN, SUDDENLY...

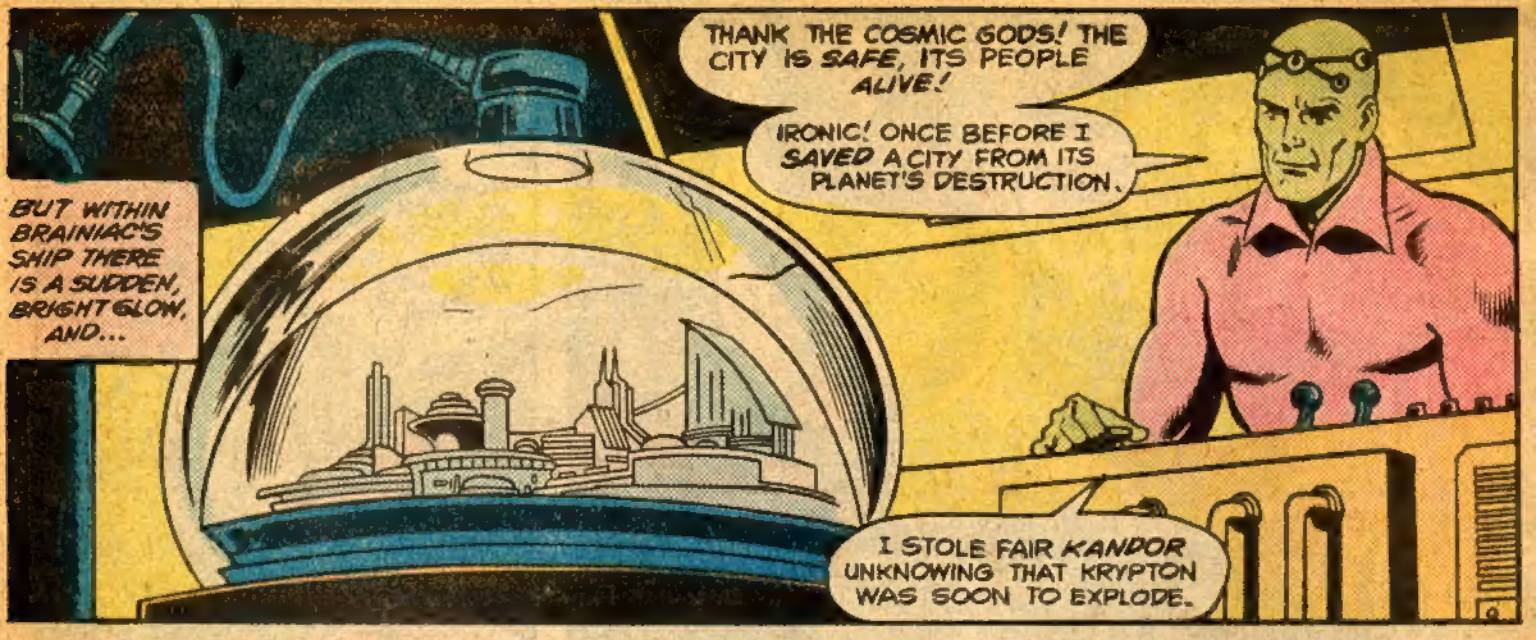

... THE BUILDING WHICH CONTAINS ENOUGH STEEL TO BUILD TWO EMPIRE STATE BUILDINGS...
... CRUMBLES TO THE GROUND LIKE SO MANY CASUALLY TOSSED PICK-UP STICKS.
ONLY ONE MAN COULD HAVE PREVENTED THAT!
BUT WHERE IS HE? WHERE IS SUPERMAN?


A REASONABLE ENOUGH QUESTION ECHOED HALFWAY ACROSS THE PACIFIC OCEAN...
HEAVE TO! THE OCEAN'S GOIN' CRAZY!
THAT SPOUT-- SHE MUST BE MORE'N A THOUSAND FEET HIGH!
WE NEED SUPERMAN OUT HERE T'SAVE US!
BUT WHERE IS HE? WHERE IS SUPERMAN?

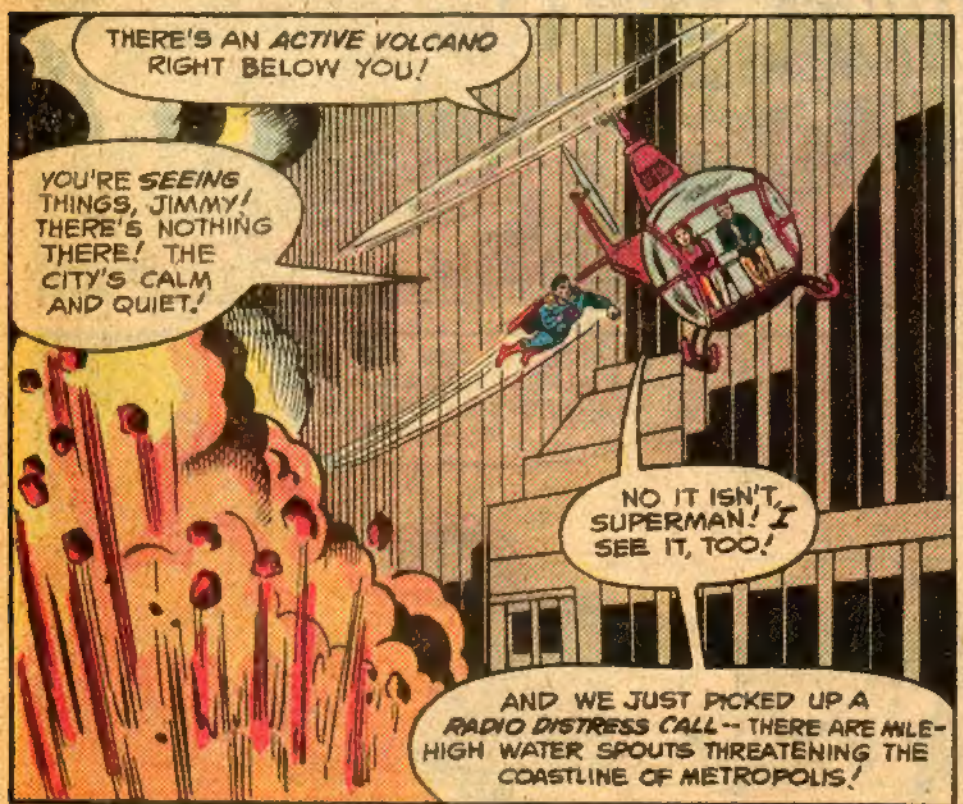

WHERE IS SUPERMAN? APPARENTLY A POPULAR QUESTION WHOSE ANSWER STILL LIES IN METROPOLIS...
HEY! YOU PEOPLE SEE WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE--? SUPERMAN!
THANK HEAVEN YOU'RE HERE. ONLY YOU CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT! THE CITY'S GONE CRAZY!
IF THERE'S TROUBLE, THEN YOU PEOPLE STAY INSIDE WHERE IT'S SAFE!
THIS IS A JOB FOR SUPERMAN!
"STAY INSIDE"? FORGET IT! I GO WHERE THE NEWS IS! JIMMY, GET THE FLYING NEWSROOM AND LET'S GO!
TROUBLE? WAS THAT REPORTER PULLING MY LEG? THERE'S NOTHING WRONG OUT HERE.
IN FACT, I CAN'T RECALL WHEN I'VE EVER SEEN THE CITY SO PEACEFUL!
BUT FOLLOWING CLOSELY BEHIND...
JIMMY, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT-- A VOLCANO IN METROPOLIS? IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
NOT AS IMPOSSIBLE AS SUPERMAN IGNORING THE DANGER! HE'S FLYING OFF!
SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH HIM, LOIS! HE'D NEVER LEAVE THE SCENE OF A DISASTER LIKE THIS! NEVER!!

WORRIED, JIMMY? WELL, YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE...
...ONLY MY COMPUTER BRAIN COULD ASCERTAIN WHAT HAPPENED TO SUPERMAN.
HE WAS ATTACKING MY PLANET-DESTROYER. IT FLASHED A DEADLY BEAM OF FUSION LIGHT AT HIM.
"IT STRUCK HIM WITH ENOUGH FORCE TO SEND HIM REELING ACROSS THE GALAXY. BUT, TO WHERE?"
IT WILL TAKE ALL MY COMPUTATION ABILITY TO CREATE A POSSIBLE TRAJECTORY AND -- WHAT?
NO! THIS IS NOT RIGHT! MY MACHINE IS ATTACKING ANOTHER WORLD!
ITS BEAMS WILL CUT THROUGH THE SURFACE, SHATTER THE PLANET AND -- BY THE SEVEN CIRCUITS!
A SINGLE FLOATING CITY! THE PLANET IS INHABITED!
ITS PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE DESTROYED!
AND I--AM HELPLESS TO SAVE THEM. ONLY MY FORCE-FIELD PREVENTS MY SHIP FROM BEING DEMOLISHED--
--AND I CANNOT EXTEND MY FIELD THAT FAR TO SAVE THOSE POOR INNOCENTS!
ARGHH! ALL THESE DEATHS WEIGH ON MY CONSCIENCE. I AM THEIR KILLER, FOR I CREATED THAT DOOMSDAY MACHINE --
WAIT!
7

MY HOLOGRAM PROJECTOR SHOWS ME ALL THAT IS HAPPENING.
AND THOUGH WHAT I SEE SICKENS MY COMPUTER SOUL--
--AN IDEA BEGINS TO FORM!
IT IS POSSIBLE THAT A CERTAIN EVIL DEVICE I CREATED LONG AGO CAN BE USED TO STOP MY PLANET-EATING MACHINE!
I HAVE BUT MOMENTS TO PUT MY PLAN INTO OPERATION -- BUT DO I HAVE MOMENTS TO SPARE?
THE PLANET BELOW TIGHTENS IN ON ITSELF. IT IS READY TO EXPLODE AND DESTROY ITS CITY WITH IT.
I BEGAN MY EVIL CAREER BY STEALING CITIES... REDUCING THEM TO DOLL-SIZE WITH MY SHRINKING RAY...
... BOTTLING THEM FOR PRESERVATION!
MY SHRINKING RAY STILL EXISTS! AND WHERE ONCE I USED IT TO TERRORIZE THE HELPLESS CITIZENS OF A GALAXY--
--NOW I CAN USE IT TO SAVE A PLANET'S PEOPLE INSTEAD!
MY RAY REACHED THE CITY JUST AS THE PLANET EXPLODED. DID I SAVE THEM?
OR WILL THE CITY I REDUCED BE ALREADY TORN ASUNDER, ITS PEOPLE DEAD OR DYING IN AGONY?


THANK THE COSMIC GODS! THE CITY IS SAFE, ITS PEOPLE ALIVE!
IRONIC! ONCE BEFORE I SAVED A CITY FROM ITS PLANET'S DESTRUCTION.
BUT WITHIN BRAINIAC'S SHIP THERE IS A SUDDEN, BRIGHT GLOW, AND...
I STOLE FAIR KANDOR UNKNOWING THAT KRYPTON WAS SOON TO EXPLODE.

BUT THIS CITY I PURPOSELY SAVED... AND IT FEELS GOOD! IT BUT BEGINS TO MAKE UP FOR ALL MY FORMER DAYS OF EVIL.
BUT NOW I MUST RETURN TO WORK... THE MACHINE MUST BE STOPPED, AND TO STOP IT--
--I MUST FIND SUPERMAN!


THERE'S AN ACTIVE VOLCANO RIGHT BELOW YOU!
YOU'RE SEEING THINGS, JIMMY! THERE'S NOTHING THERE! THE CITY'S CALM AND QUIET!
NO IT ISN'T, SUPERMAN! I SEE IT, TOO!
AND WE JUST PICKED UP A RADIO DISTRESS CALL -- THERE ARE MILE-HIGH WATER SPOUTS THREATENING THE COASTLINE OF METROPOLIS!

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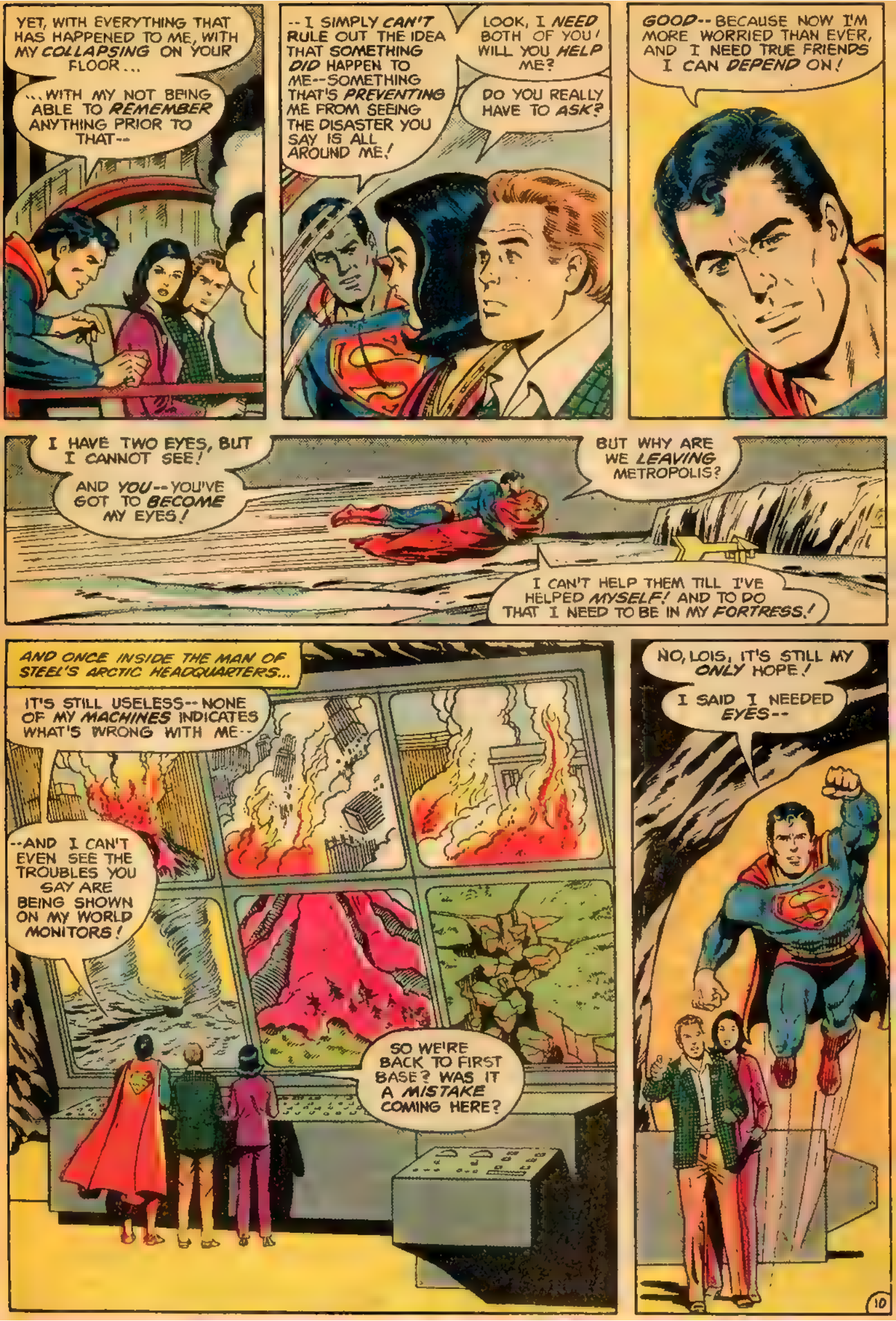
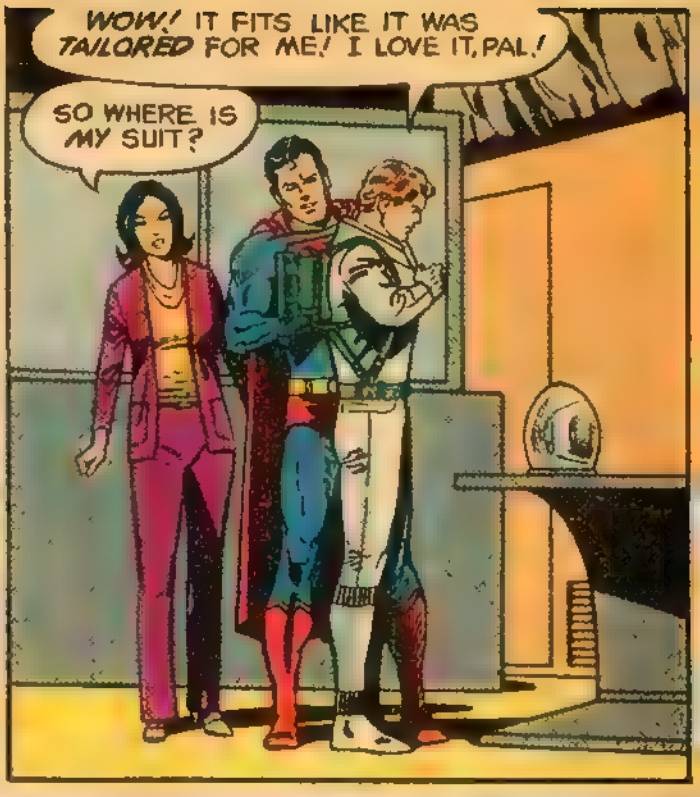
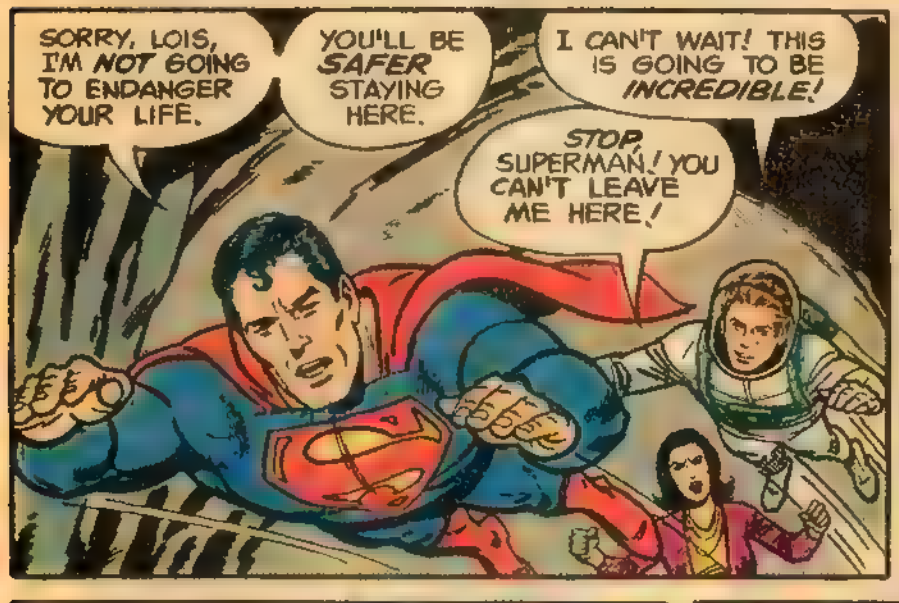
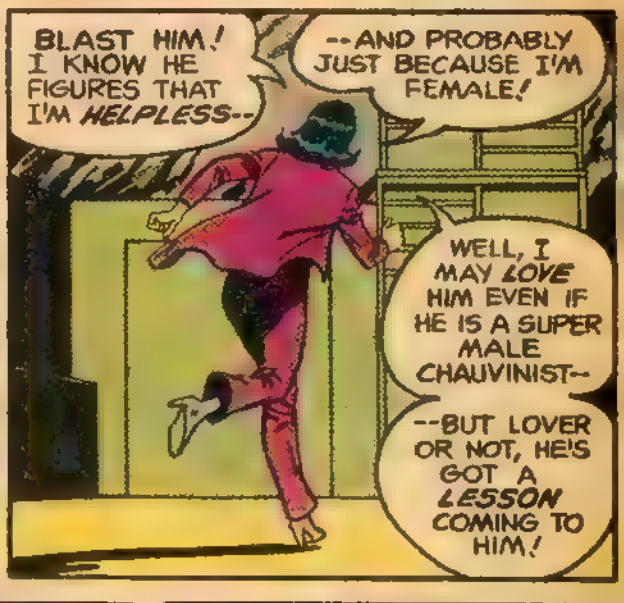

YET, WITH EVERYTHING THAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME, WITH MY COLLAPSING ON YOUR FLOOR...
...WITH MY NOT BEING ABLE TO REMEMBER ANYTHING PRIOR TO THAT--
--I SIMPLY CAN'T RULE OUT THE IDEA THAT SOMETHING DID HAPPEN TO ME--SOMETHING THAT'S PREVENTING ME FROM SEEING THE DISASTER YOU SAY IS ALL AROUND ME!
LOOK, I NEED BOTH OF YOU! WILL YOU HELP ME?
DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO ASK?
GOOD--BECAUSE NOW I'M MORE WORRIED THAN EVER, AND I NEED TRUE FRIENDS I CAN DEPEND ON!
I HAVE TWO EYES, BUT I CANNOT SEE!
AND YOU--YOU'VE GOT TO BECOME MY EYES!
BUT WHY ARE WE LEAVING METROPOLIS?
I CAN'T HELP THEM TILL I'VE HELPED MYSELF! AND TO DO THAT I NEED TO BE IN MY FORTRESS!
AND ONCE INSIDE THE MAN OF STEEL'S ARCTIC HEADQUARTERS...
IT'S STILL USELESS--NONE OF MY MACHINES INDICATES WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME--
--AND I CAN'T EVEN SEE THE TROUBLES YOU SAY ARE BEING SHOWN ON MY WORLD MONITORS!
SO WE'RE BACK TO FIRST BASE? WAS IT A MISTAKE COMING HERE?
NO, LOIS, IT'S STILL MY ONLY HOPE!
I SAID I NEEDED EYES--
10

--AND I NEED YOU WITH ME--GUIDING ME--BESIDE ME WHILE I'M IN ACTION!
JIM, THIS IS A FLYING SUIT--I TOOK SEVERAL LIKE THIS FROM A CRIMINAL GANG CALLED THE ROCKETEERS!
PLEASE, TRY IT ON, WILL YOU?

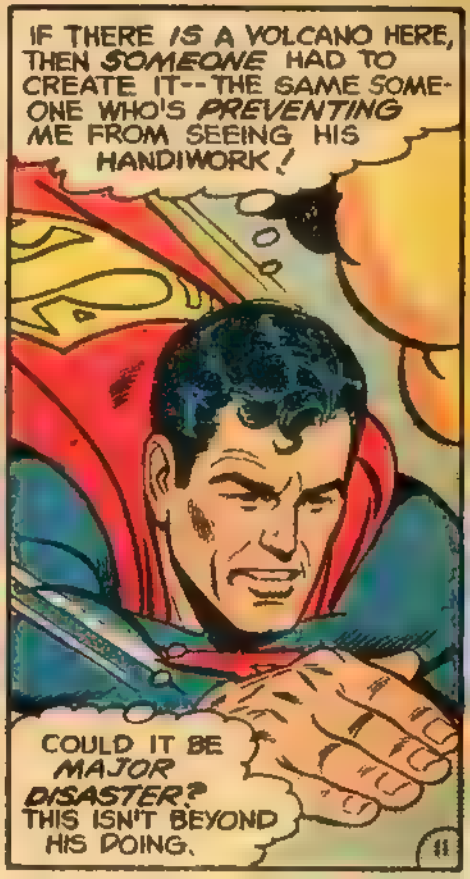

WOW! IT FITS LIKE IT WAS TAILORED FOR ME! I LOVE IT, PAL!
SO WHERE IS MY SUIT?


SORRY, LOIS, I'M NOT GOING TO ENDANGER YOUR LIFE.
YOU'LL BE SAFER STAYING HERE.
I CAN'T WAIT! THIS IS GOING TO BE INCREDIBLE!
STOP, SUPERMAN! YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME HERE!


BLAST HIM! I KNOW HE FIGURES THAT I'M HELPLESS--
--AND PROBABLY JUST BECAUSE I'M FEMALE!
WELL, I MAY LOVE HIM EVEN IF HE IS A SUPER MALE CHAUVINIST--
--BUT LOVER OR NOT, HE'S GOT A LESSON COMING TO HIM!

METROPOLIS, MERE MINUTES LATER...
...I'LL GO ALONG IF YOU SAY THERE'S A VOLCANO BELOW, BUT I'LL BE HANGED IF I SEE IT!
WHICH IS WHY I'M HERE. HAVE NO FEAR, PAL, JIMMY OLSEN'S HERE!

HEAD STRAIGHT DOWN AND VEER SLIGHTLY TO THE LEFT!
I FEEL HELPLESS AS A BLIND MAN! I ACCEPT THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG, BUT ALL I SEE IS A CALM, QUIET STREET!

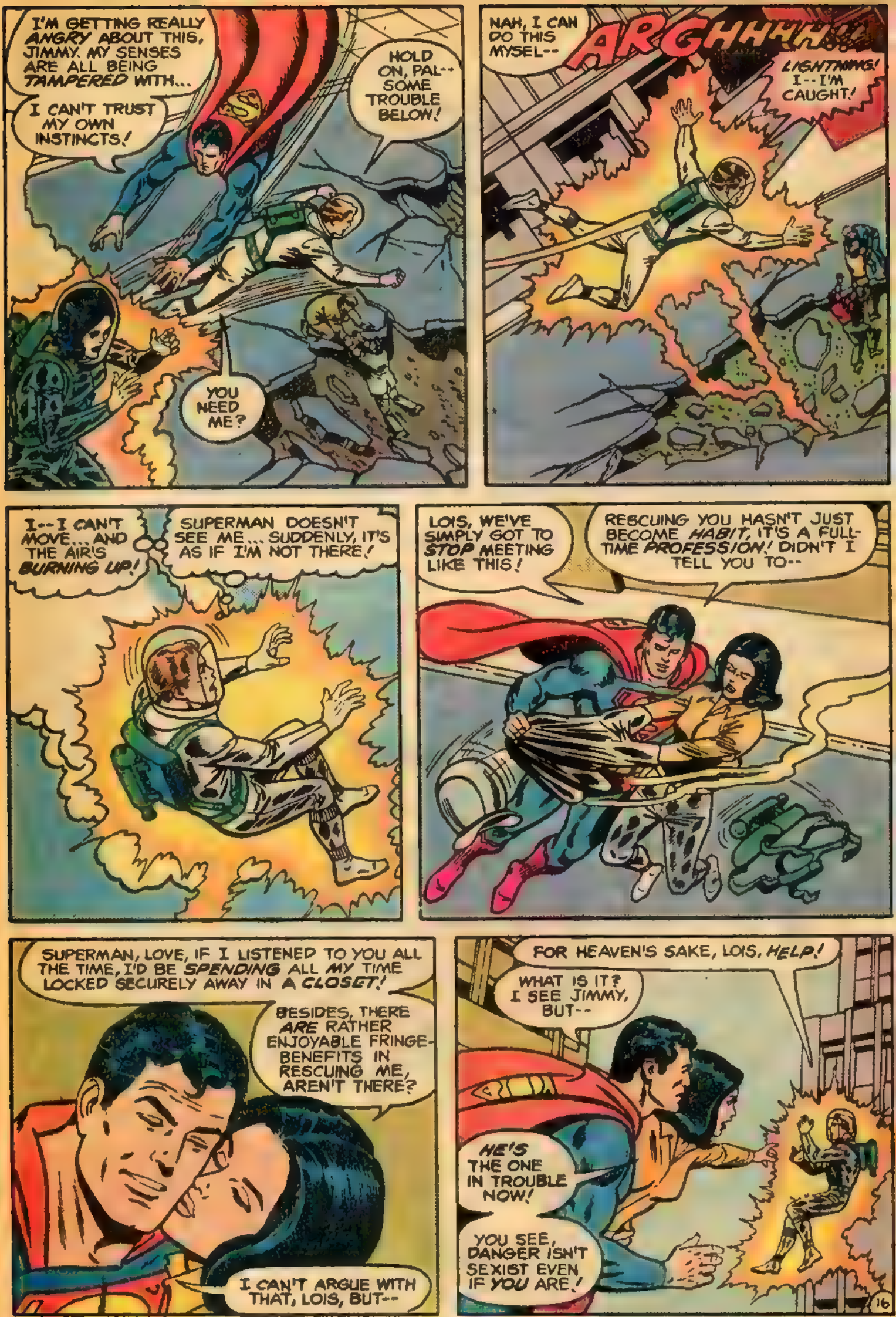

IF THERE IS A VOLCANO HERE, THEN SOMEONE HAD TO CREATE IT--THE SAME SOMEONE WHO'S PREVENTING ME FROM SEEING HIS HANDIWORK!
COULD IT BE MAJOR DISASTER? THIS ISN'T BEYOND HIS DOING.

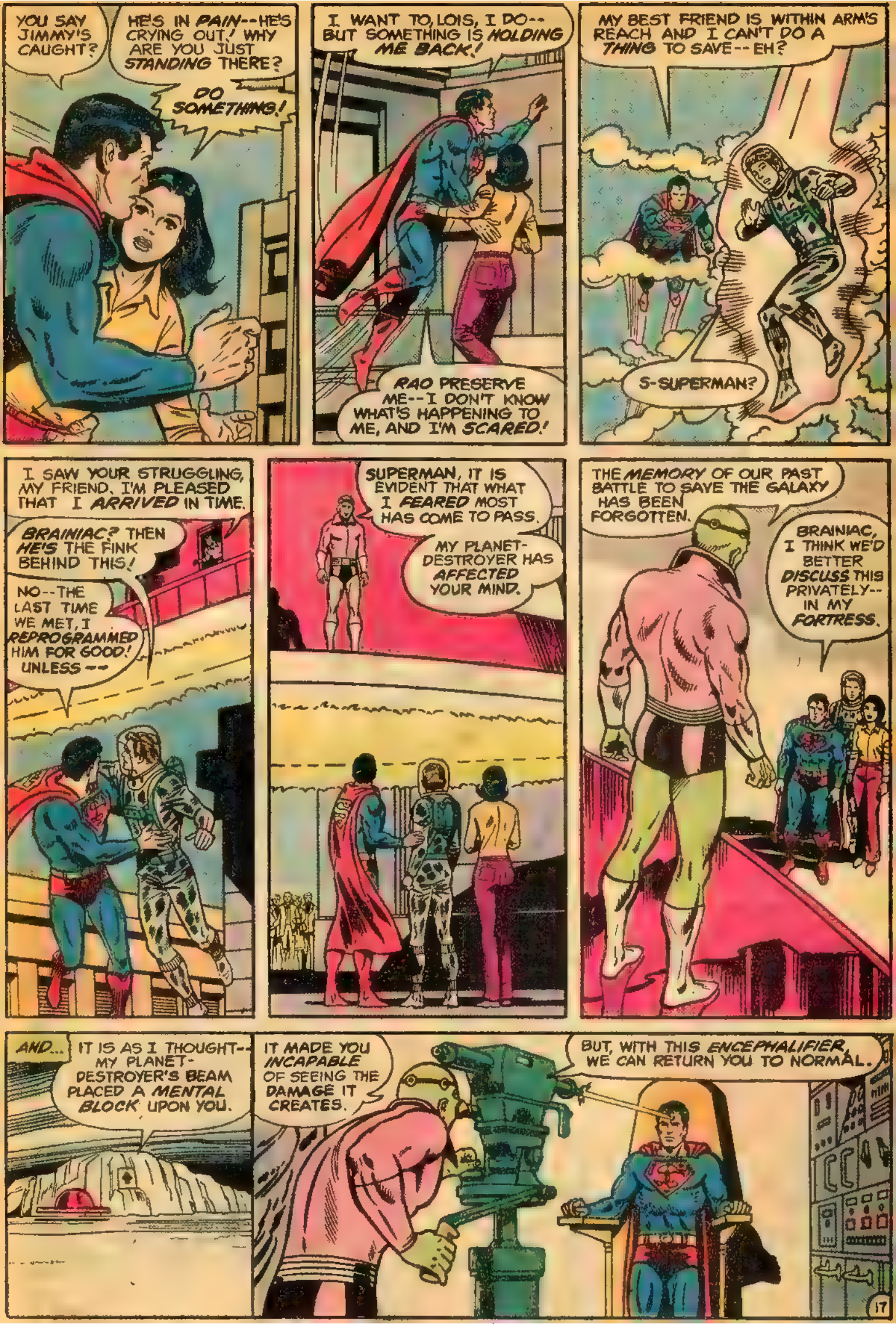
YET WHY WOULD THE MAJOR CREATE DISASTERS ALL ACROSS THE WORLD?
NO, THIS IS DEFINITELY SOMEONE ELSE'S DOING--BUT WHO? WHO--?
WATCH OUT, SUPERMAN--
--THE VOLCANO'S ERUPTING--CHUNKS OF MOLTEN LAVA ARE FLYING EVERYWHERE!
IF THIS JET-SUIT WASN'T FUNCTIONING PROPERLY, MY HAIR WOULDN'T BE THE ONLY RED THING ABOUT ME!
WHAT DO I DO? YOU'LL HAVE TO TELL ME!
OBOY, THIS ISN'T EASY. YOU COULD SAVE THE PEOPLE--
--BUT THAT WOULDN'T BE STOPPING THE PROBLEM, WOULD IT?
JIMMY, JUST GUIDE ME TO THE VOLCANO--YOU HANDLE THE PEOPLE HERE...
...AND LET ME TAKE CARE OF THE SOURCE!
GOT YA, PAL... AND MOLTY'S RIGHT BEFORE YOU!
I DON'T LIKE THIS, NOT ONE BIT.
12

I'M USED TO BEING IN CHARGE... AND INSTEAD--
--ALL I'M DOING IS FLYING IN CIRCLES--LITERALLY!
I FLIT HERE AND THERE, DO WHATEVER JIMMY TELLS ME...
...AND JUST HOPE THAT HIS ADVICE IS THE BEST, BUT HE'S NOT TRAINED AS I AM TO HANDLE DANGERS LIKE THIS.
SUPERMAN, TROUBLE COMING AT TWO O'CLOCK!
THERE'S HALF A DOZEN WATERSPOUTS SPINNING TOWARD US LIKE TORNADOES ON A KANSAS PLAIN.
THEY'LL RIP THROUGH THE CITY AS IF IT WERE MADE OUT OF PAPER!
KEEP TRACK OF THEM FOR ME, JIM. I'VE GOT TO GET RID OF OUR LAVA FLOW!
AND A BLAST OF SUPER-FRIGID AIR SHOULD TURN THIS MOLTEN ROCK INTO THE WORLD'S LARGEST LAVASICLE!
GUIDE ME, JIM--WHERE ARE THESE WATER COLUMNS?
THEY'RE EVERYWHERE--I CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO TELL YOU WHERE.
GIVE ME A HEIGHT--DISTANCE, SOMETHING I CAN GO ON!
I NEED HARD FACTS, JIMMY! YOU'VE GOT TO HELP!
13

OKAY, OKAY! THERE'S THREE OF THEM IN FRONT OF YOU--ABOUT A HUNDRED FEET APART!
THEY'RE STARTING TO HIT THE BUILDINGS... AND THEY GO ALL THE WAY UP THROUGH THE CLOUDBANK DIRECTLY ABOVE YOU!
GOT IT, JIM. AND THANKS.
YOU CAN'T PHYSICALLY FIGHT WATER, BUT I DON'T HAVE TO.
JUST HAVE TO CONCENTRATE MY HEAT VISION--
--ENOUGH TO CONDENSE THE WATER INTO STEAM!
THE DANGER WILL SIMPLY BURN AWAY!
WE'LL REPEAT THIS ON THE OTHER COLUMNS...
AND, ONCE THAT DANGER IS PAST...
ANYTHING ELSE?
THAT'S LIKE ASKING IF SATURN HAS RINGS! C'MON, FOLLOW ME!
IF WHAT I PICKED UP ON MY HELMET RADIO IS TRUE--
--THEN EVEN I'M NOT GONNA BELIEVE IT UNLESS I SEE IT!
THAT PUTS YOU ONE UP ON ME, PAL--
--BECAUSE I WON'T SEE IT AT ALL!

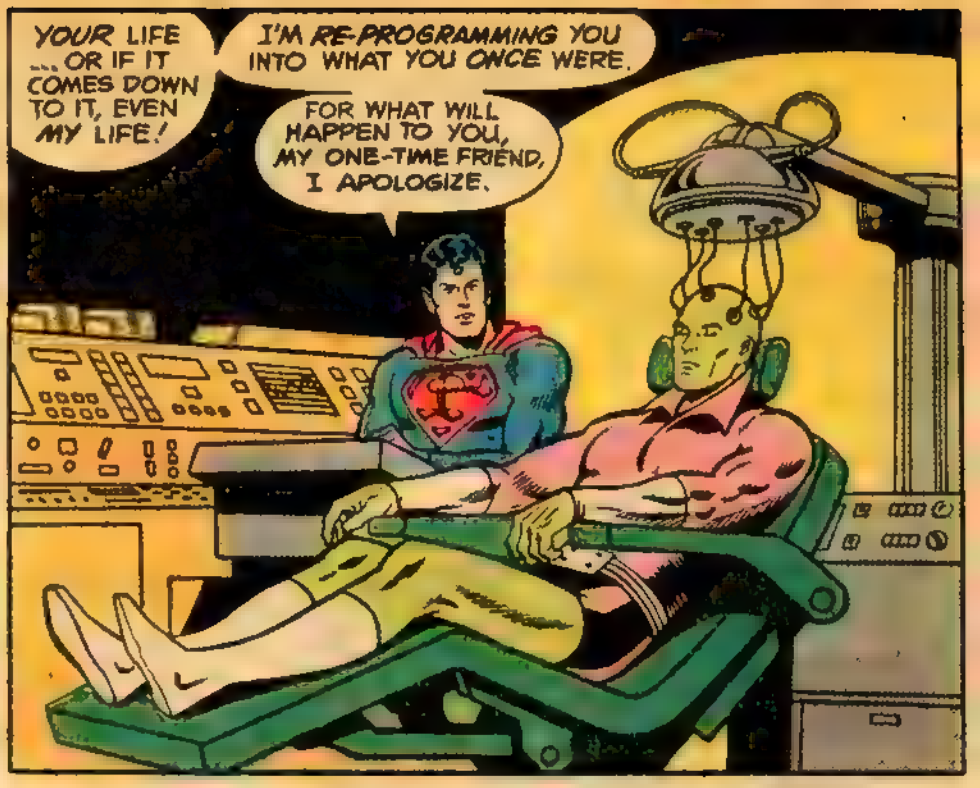
BUT SEEING ISN'T ALWAYS BELIEVING AS A SLIM, JET-SUITED FIGURE SUDDENLY FINDS OUT...
NOW I KNOW EVERYTHING'S GONE TOPSY-TURVY!
LIGHTNING SHOOTING UP FROM THE GROUND? I'D EXPECT TO SEE THAT IN A GEORGE LUCAS MOVIE!
SOMETHING WRONG IN METROPOLIS, AND ONE WAY OR ANOTHER I'M GOING TO FIND OUT WHAT!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT, BUT I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN!
STILL, I HAVE BETTER THINGS TO DO THAN WORRY ABOUT L--
SUPERMAN, STOP--DON'T YOU SEE IT?
SEE WHAT? YOU KNOW I CAN'T SEE WHAT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME!
YOU'VE GOT TO, SUPERMAN--
--IT'S LOIS!
SHE'S SURROUNDED BY LIGHTNING!
IT'S BURNING RIGHT THROUGH HER JET-SUIT!
AMAZING! I SEE LOIS, BUT I SEE HER SIMPLY STANDING THERE WITH NOTHING WRONG WHATSOEVER!
15


I'M GETTING REALLY ANGRY ABOUT THIS, JIMMY. MY SENSES ARE ALL BEING TAMPERED WITH...
I CAN'T TRUST MY OWN INSTINCTS!
HOLD ON, PAL-- SOME TROUBLE BELOW!
YOU NEED ME?
NAH, I CAN DO THIS MYSEL--
ARGHHHH!!
LIGHTNING! I--I'M CAUGHT!
I--I CAN'T MOVE... AND THE AIR'S BURNING UP!
SUPERMAN DOESN'T SEE ME... SUDDENLY, IT'S AS IF I'M NOT THERE!
LOIS, WE'VE SIMPLY GOT TO STOP MEETING LIKE THIS!
RESCUING YOU HASN'T JUST BECOME HABIT, IT'S A FULL-TIME PROFESSION! DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO--
SUPERMAN, LOVE, IF I LISTENED TO YOU ALL THE TIME, I'D BE SPENDING ALL MY TIME LOCKED SECURELY AWAY IN A CLOSET!
BESIDES, THERE ARE RATHER ENJOYABLE FRINGE-BENEFITS IN RESCUING ME, AREN'T THERE?
I CAN'T ARGUE WITH THAT, LOIS, BUT--
FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, LOIS, HELP!
WHAT IS IT? I SEE JIMMY, BUT--
HE'S THE ONE IN TROUBLE NOW!
YOU SEE, DANGER ISN'T SEXIST EVEN IF YOU ARE!

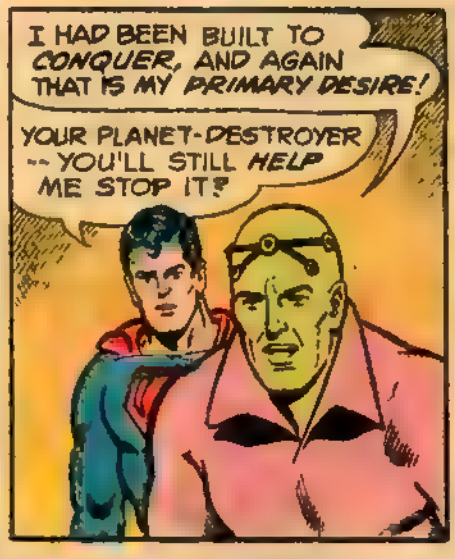

YOU SAY JIMMY'S CAUGHT?
HE'S IN PAIN--HE'S CRYING OUT! WHY ARE YOU JUST STANDING THERE?
DO SOMETHING!
I WANT TO, LOIS, I DO-- BUT SOMETHING IS HOLDING ME BACK!
RAO PRESERVE ME--I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME, AND I'M SCARED!
MY BEST FRIEND IS WITHIN ARM'S REACH AND I CAN'T DO A THING TO SAVE--EH?
S-SUPERMAN?
I SAW YOUR STRUGGLING, MY FRIEND. I'M PLEASED THAT I ARRIVED IN TIME.
BRAINIAC? THEN HE'S THE FINK BEHIND THIS!
NO--THE LAST TIME WE MET, I REPROGRAMMED HIM FOR GOOD! UNLESS --
SUPERMAN, IT IS EVIDENT THAT WHAT I FEARED MOST HAS COME TO PASS.
MY PLANET-DESTROYER HAS AFFECTED YOUR MIND.
THE MEMORY OF OUR PAST BATTLE TO SAVE THE GALAXY HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN.
BRAINIAC, I THINK WE'D BETTER DISCUSS THIS PRIVATELY-- IN MY FORTRESS.
AND...
IT IS AS I THOUGHT-- MY PLANET-DESTROYER'S BEAM PLACED A MENTAL BLOCK UPON YOU.
IT MADE YOU INCAPABLE OF SEEING THE DAMAGE IT CREATES.
BUT, WITH THIS ENCEPHALIFIER, WE CAN RETURN YOU TO NORMAL.
17

TIME PASSES RAPIDLY, AND WITHIN HALF AN HOUR...
IT'S AS IF A BLANKET HAS BEEN LIFTED FROM MY MIND. I REMEMBER EVERYTHING...
EVERYTHING FROM OUR STRUGGLE TO STOP YOUR MACHINE--
--TO OUR DEFEAT!
THAT IS TRUE. FORCE ALONE WILL NOT DESTROY THE PLANET-EATER.
WE NEED SOME CLUE TO ITS WEAKNESS.
YOU BUILT IT, BRAINIAC. SURELY YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE PUT IN SOME FAIL-SAFE MECHANISM!
IF I DID, THE KNOWLEDGE OF IT VANISHED WITH MY REPROGRAMMING.
ALL TRACES OF MY DEVIOUS PAST WERE EXPUNGED ALONG WITH MY EVIL.
TO THINK, AN EVIL BRAINIAC COULD STOP THE MACHINE, ONE WHO FIGHTS FOR GOOD, HOWEVER--
--STANDS HELPLESS BE-FORE ITS TERRIFYING MIGHT!
ALREADY THE MACHINE HAS INTERFERED WITH YOUR PLANET'S NATURE.
NEXT SHALL COME THE EARTHQUAKES -- THE PLANET SHALL BE TORN ASUNDER...
COULD I REPROGRAM YOU, BRAINIAC? WOULD THAT HELP?
TURN ME INTO A BEING OF EVIL AGAIN? NO, SUPERMAN -- DO NOT CONSIDER IT.
MY COMPUTER BRAIN IS LIKE YOUR OWN-- PERFORM-ING ANOTHER OPERATION ON SO DELICATE A MECHANISM--
--WOULD BE IRREVERSIBLE! I COULD NEVER BE TURNED GOOD AGAIN!
FOR TOO LONG MY ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING LED ME TO ATTACK WORLDS, TO DESIRE UNIVERSAL DOMINATION!
BUT NOW, BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, I CAN SEE HOW HORRIBLE THAT EVIL WAS.
IT PAINS ME TO EVEN THINK ABOUT MY PAST, SUPERMAN TO TALK OF RETURNING ME TO THOSE EVIL WAYS--
--WOULD BE THE GREATEST TORTURE A MAN COULD IMAGINE.
18

YET, I DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE, DO I?
I'M SORRY FOR THIS, BRAINIAC -- SORRIER THAN YOU CAN EVER IMAGINE.
WHAT I AM DOING IS AGAINST EVERY-THING I BELIEVE...
...BUT, THE SURVIVAL, THE LIFE OF THE GALAXY, MUST COME BEFORE THE LIFE OF ANY ONE MAN!


YOUR LIFE ...OR IF IT COMES DOWN TO IT, EVEN MY LIFE!
I'M RE-PROGRAMMING YOU INTO WHAT YOU ONCE WERE.
FOR WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOU, MY ONE-TIME FRIEND, I APOLOGIZE.

TIME CRAWLS BY NOW. EVERY MOMENT AN ENDLESS ETERNITY. THEN...
WELL--?
INFORMATION FLOODS INTO ME, SUPERMAN.
I HAVE BEEN RETURNED TO WHAT I WAS DESTINED TO BE.

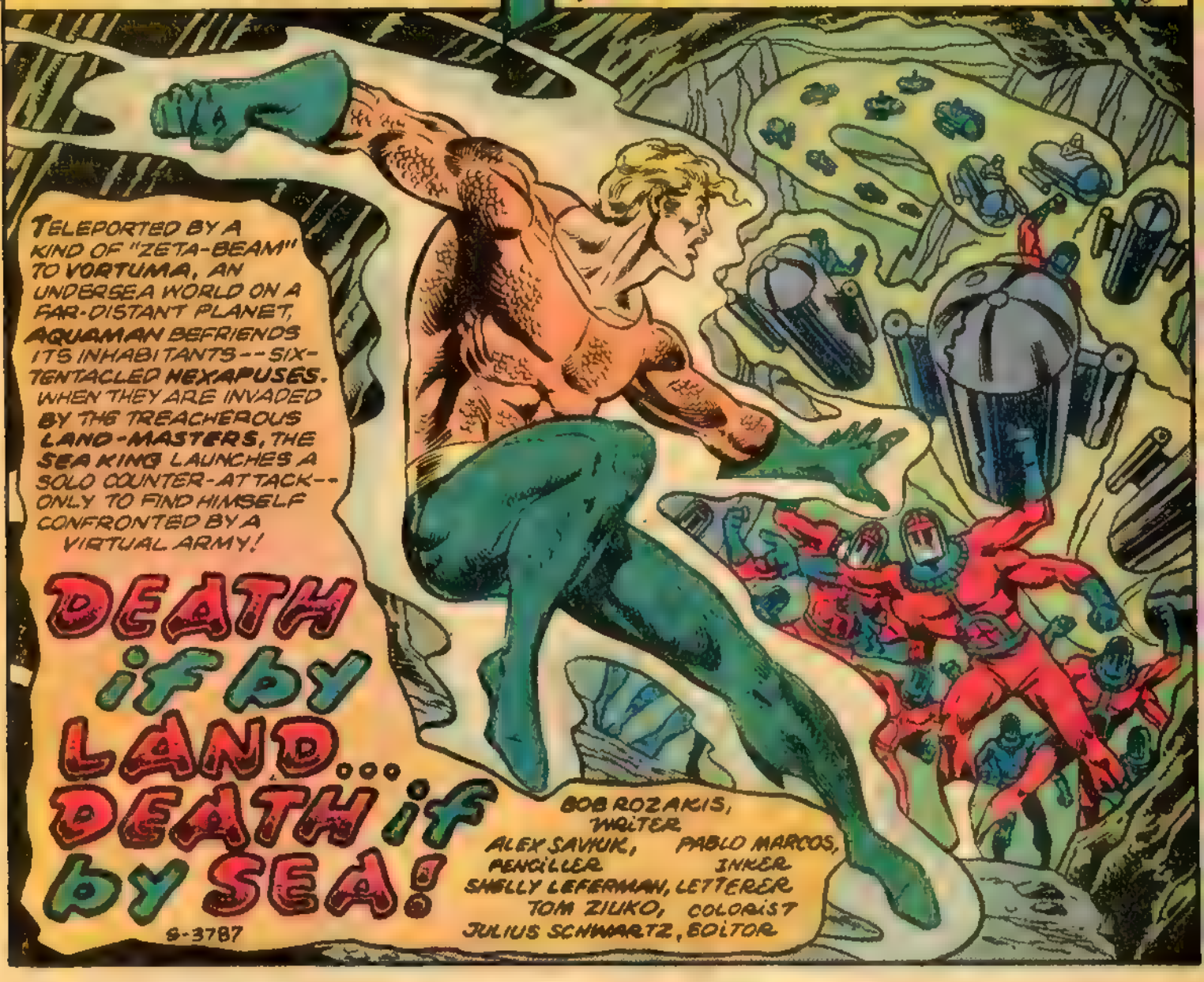


NEXT ISSUE: SUPERMAN BATTLES THE MOST INCREDIBLE MENACES THE UNIVERSE HAS EVER FACED. CAN EVEN THE MAN OF STEEL SURVIVE HIS...

DEADLY VOYAGE!

THE SON OF A LIGHTHOUSE-KEEPER AND A WOMAN EXILED FROM SUNKEN ATLANTIS, *ARTHUR CURRY* GREW TO MANHOOD WITH THE POWER TO COMMAND ALL FORMS OF SEA-LIFE! TODAY HE IS THE KING OF THE SEVEN SEAS, THE *MARINE MARVEL* KNOWN AS ...

AQUAMAN®



TELEPORTED BY A KIND OF "ZETA-BEAM" TO **VORTUMA**, AN UNDERSEA WORLD ON A FAR-DISTANT PLANET, **AQUAMAN** BEFRIENDS ITS INHABITANTS -- SIX-TENTACLED **HEXAPUSES**. WHEN THEY ARE INVADED BY THE TREACHEROUS **LAND-MASTERS**, THE **SEA KING** LAUNCHES A SOLO COUNTER-ATTACK -- ONLY TO FIND HIMSELF CONFRONTED BY A VIRTUAL ARMY!

DEATH if by LAND... DEATH if by SEA!

S-3787

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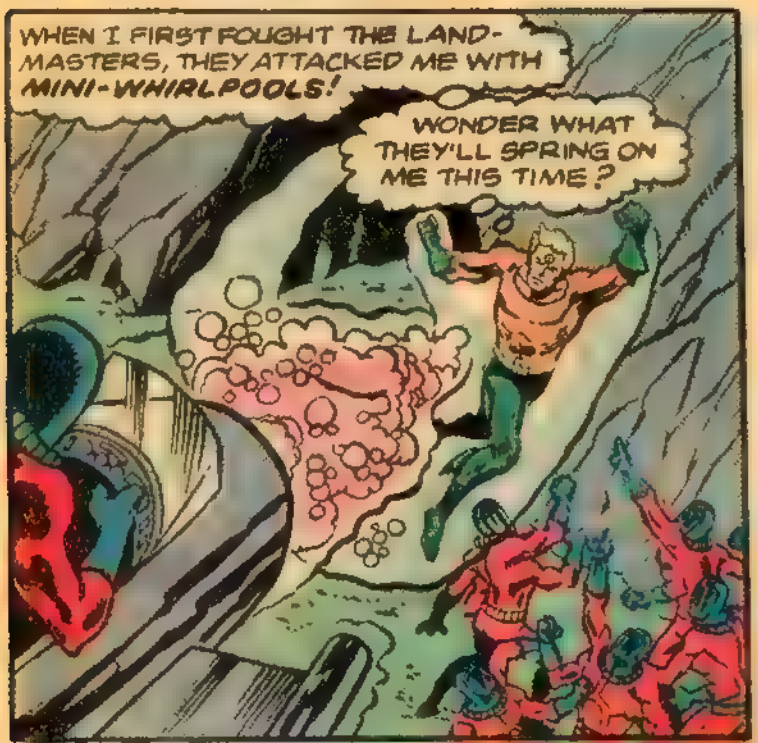
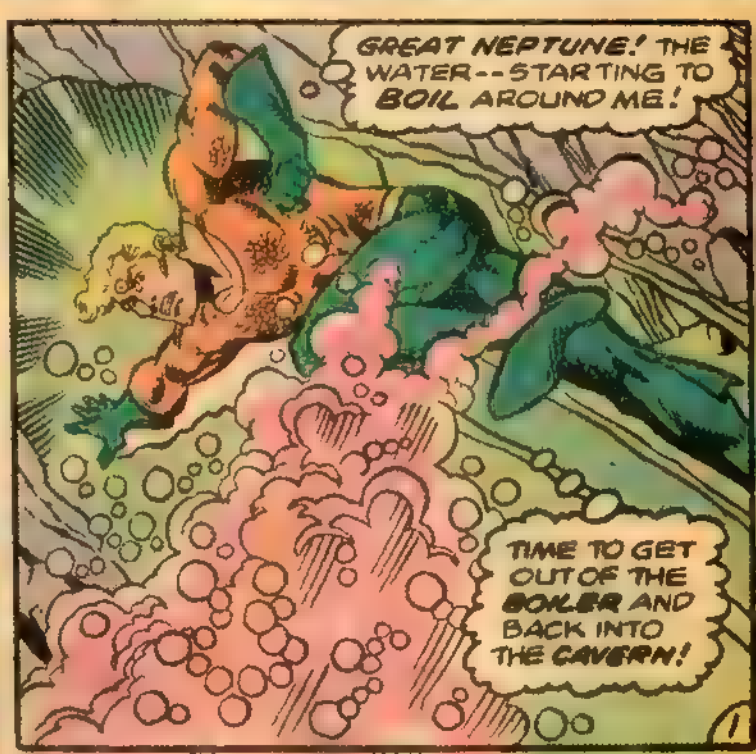
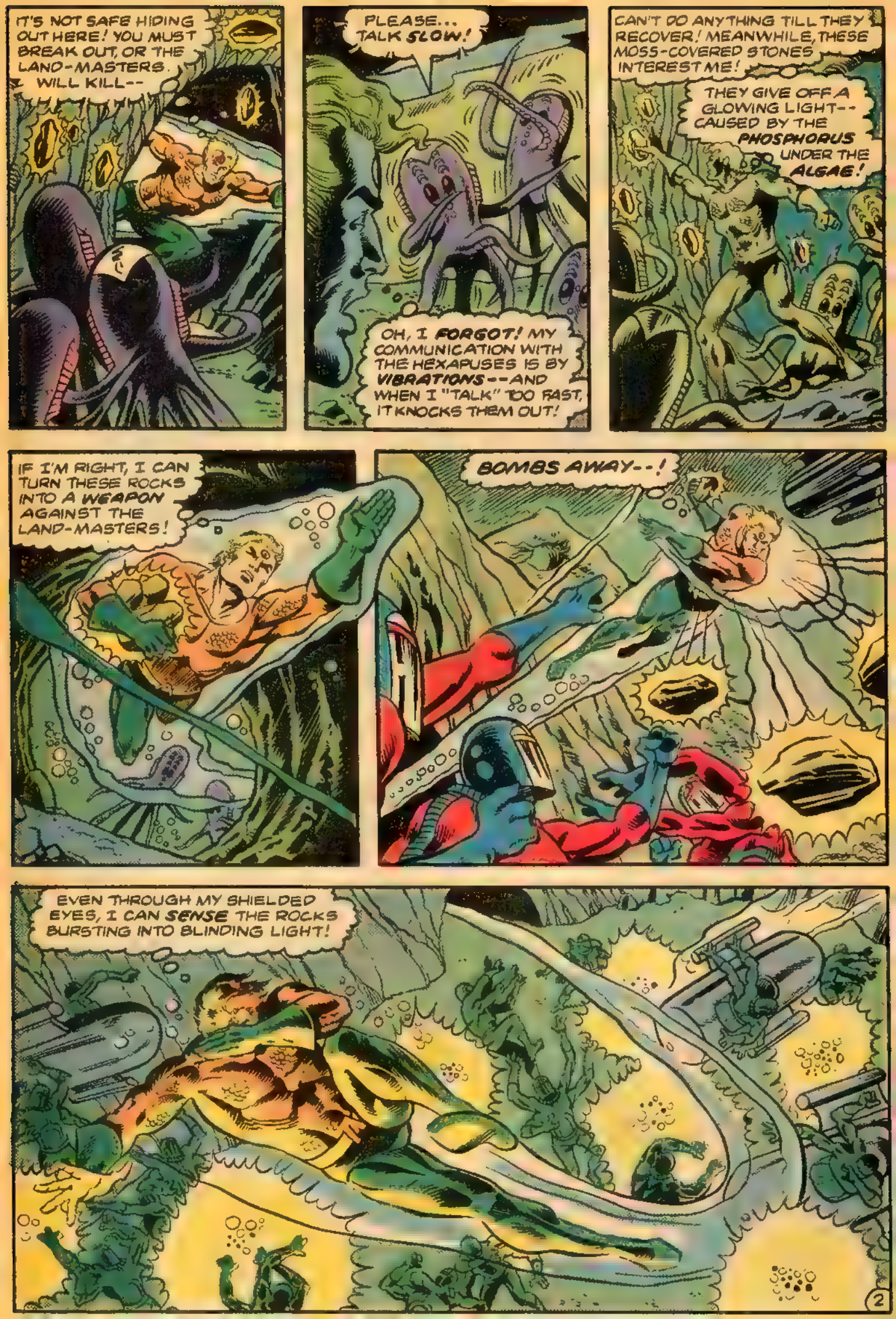
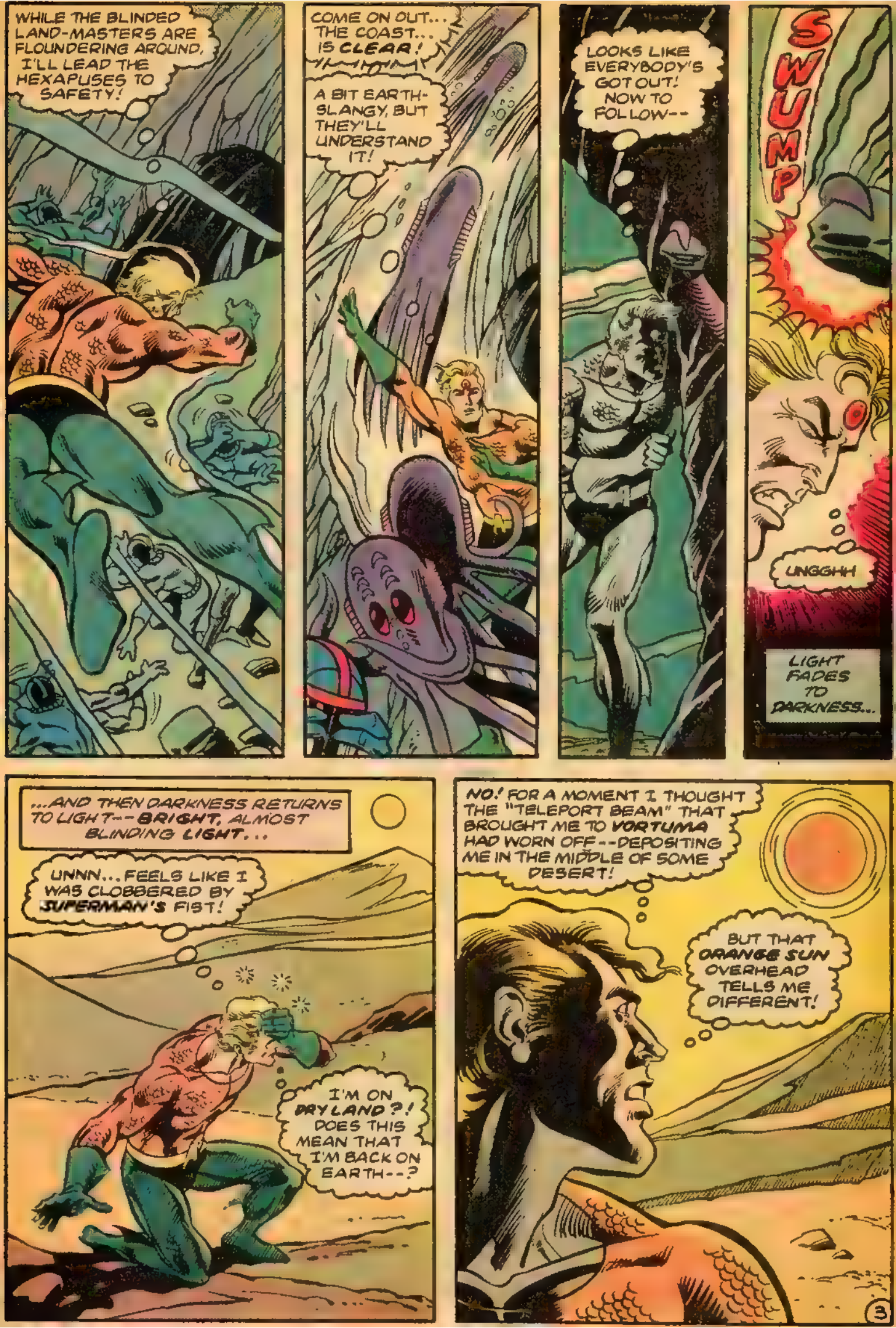
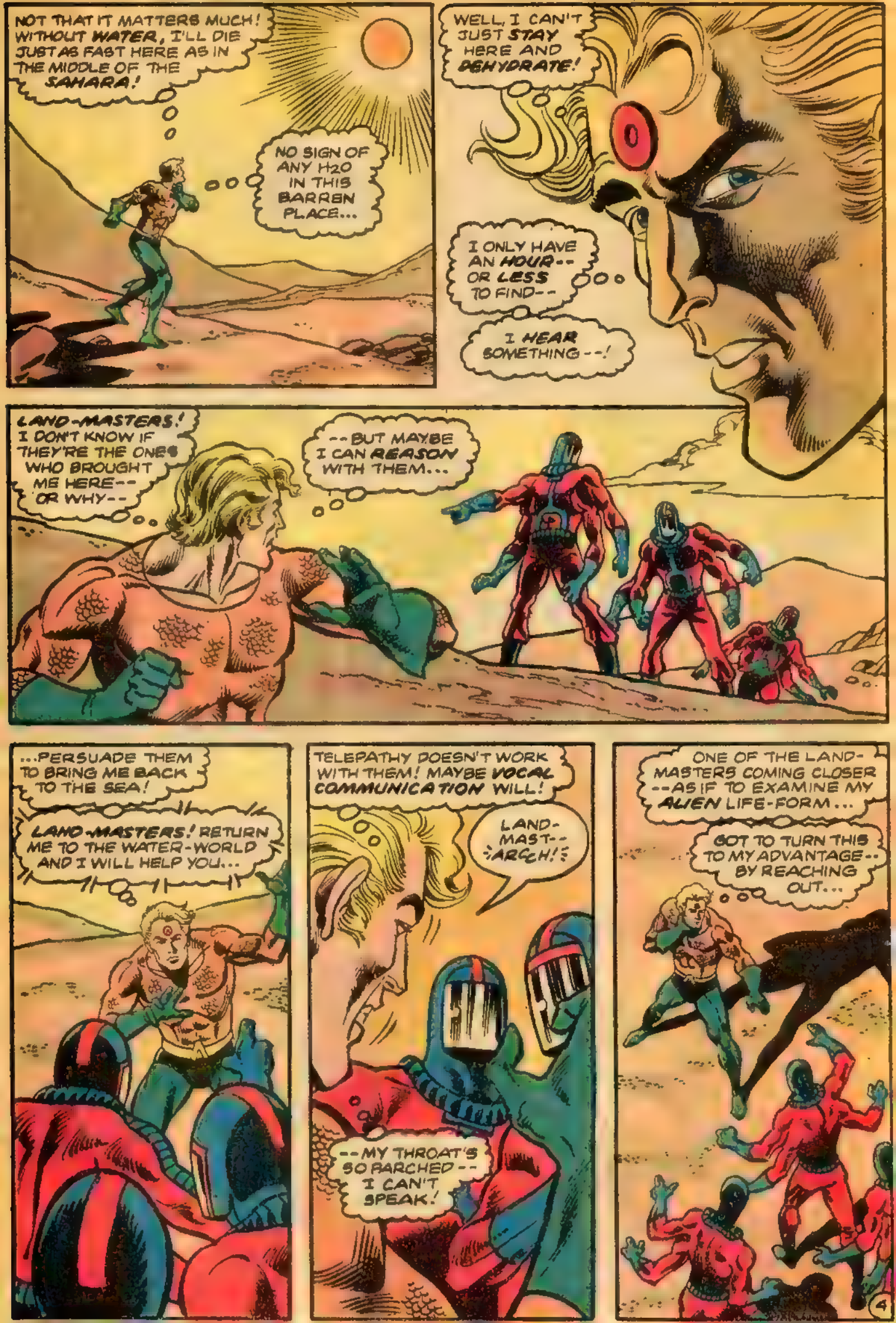





IT'S NOT SAFE HIDING OUT HERE! YOU MUST BREAK OUT, OR THE LAND-MASTERS WILL KILL--
PLEASE... TALK SLOW!
OH, I FORGOT! MY COMMUNICATION WITH THE HEXAPUSES IS BY VIBRATIONS--AND WHEN I "TALK" TOO FAST, IT KNOCKS THEM OUT!
CAN'T DO ANYTHING TILL THEY RECOVER! MEANWHILE, THESE MOSS-COVERED STONES INTEREST ME!
THEY GIVE OFF A GLOWING LIGHT-- CAUSED BY THE PHOSPHORUS UNDER THE ALGAE!
IF I'M RIGHT, I CAN TURN THESE ROCKS INTO A WEAPON AGAINST THE LAND-MASTERS!
BOMBS AWAY--!
EVEN THROUGH MY SHIELDED EYES, I CAN SENSE THE ROCKS BURSTING INTO BLINDING LIGHT!
2

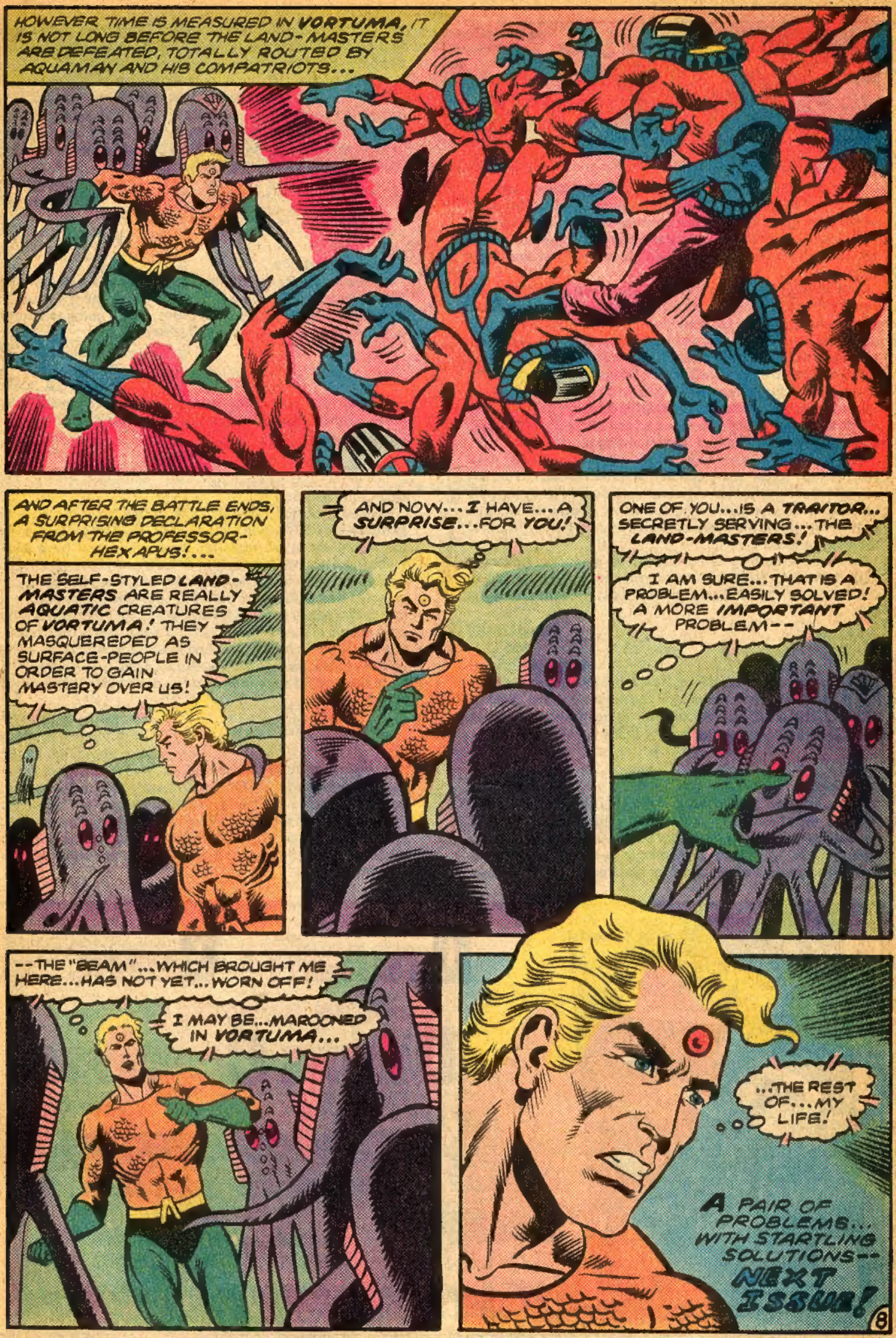

WHILE THE BLINDED LAND-MASTERS ARE FLOUNDERING AROUND, I'LL LEAD THE HEXAPUSES TO SAFETY!
COME ON OUT... THE COAST... IS CLEAR!
A BIT EARTH-SLANGY, BUT THEY'LL UNDERSTAND IT!
LOOKS LIKE EVERYBODY'S GOT OUT! NOW TO FOLLOW--
SWUMP
UNGGHH
LIGHT FADES TO DARKNESS...
...AND THEN DARKNESS RETURNS TO LIGHT--BRIGHT, ALMOST BLINDING LIGHT...
UNNN... FEELS LIKE I WAS CLOBBERED BY SUPERMAN'S FIST!
I'M ON DRY LAND?! DOES THIS MEAN THAT I'M BACK ON EARTH--?
NO! FOR A MOMENT I THOUGHT THE "TELEPORT BEAM" THAT BROUGHT ME TO VORTUMA HAD WORN OFF--DEPOSITING ME IN THE MIDDLE OF SOME DESERT!
BUT THAT ORANGE SUN OVERHEAD TELLS ME DIFFERENT!
3

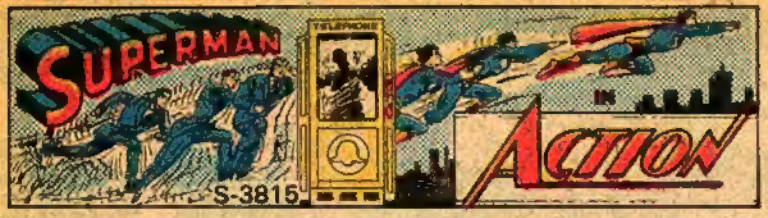

NOT THAT IT MATTERS MUCH! WITHOUT WATER, I'LL DIE JUST AS FAST HERE AS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SAHARA!
NO SIGN OF ANY H2O IN THIS BARREN PLACE...
WELL, I CAN'T JUST STAY HERE AND DEHYDRATE!
I ONLY HAVE AN HOUR-- OR LESS TO FIND--
I HEAR SOMETHING--!
LAND-MASTERS! I DON'T KNOW IF THEY'RE THE ONES WHO BROUGHT ME HERE-- OR WHY--
--BUT MAYBE I CAN REASON WITH THEM...
...PERSUADE THEM TO BRING ME BACK TO THE SEA!
LAND-MASTERS! RETURN ME TO THE WATER-WORLD AND I WILL HELP YOU...
TELEPATHY DOESN'T WORK WITH THEM! MAYBE VOCAL COMMUNICATION WILL!
LAND-MAST--
--MY THROAT'S SO PARCHED-- I CAN'T SPEAK!
ONE OF THE LAND-MASTERS COMING CLOSER --AS IF TO EXAMINE MY ALIEN LIFE-FORM...
GOT TO TURN THIS TO MY ADVANTAGE-- BY REACHING OUT...
4

..AND PULLING OFF HIS SUIT!
RRIPP
WATER!? THE LAND-MASTER'S SUIT IS FILLED WITH LIFE-SAVING WATER!
BUT THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE AIR-BREATHERS!
THIS DOESN'T MAKE SENSE ...UNLESS--
THE SEA KING'S REALIZATION WILL HAVE TO REMAIN HIS ALONE FOR NOW...
... AS HE TACKLES A MORE URGENT TASK--
THAT DRENCHING WON'T SAVE ME FOR LONG!
DON'T KNOW WHERE THOSE OTHER MASTERS ARE HEADING--
--BUT I'M HOPING IT'S FOR THE SEA!
UNDER THE BROILING SUN, THE CHASE CONTINUES...
PANT CAN'T GO ON MUCH LONGER PANT
HOPE THAT ISN'T A MIRAGE AHEAD...
CAN'T WALK ANOTHER STEP...
...HAVE TO ROLL DOWN...
SPLASH!
5

GAINING A NEW LEASE ON LIFE, AQUAMAN FOLLOWS HIS QUARRY UNDERWATER...
THEY MUST BE HEADING FOR THEIR UNDERSEA LAIR!
ALL THE PIECES OF THE LAND-MASTERS' SECRET ARE FALLING INTO PLACE!
THEY MAY HAVE HAD THE EDGE ON LAND, BUT NOW THAT I'M IN MY ELEMENT, KEEPING UP WITH THEM IS NO PROBLEM!
AT LAST--THEIR "HOME" BASE!
I'M NOT WAITING FOR AN INVITATION--
I'M COMING THROUGH LIKE THE UNWELCOME WAGON!
THIS TAKES CARE OF THE GUARDS BEFORE THEY CAN RAISE AN ALARM!
SWOP
WOK
NOW TO CHECK OUT MY THEORY--
6

JUST AS I FIGURED! THE LAND-MASTERS ARE REALLY HEXAPUSES!
AND NOW THAT I'VE INVADED THEIR LAIR, I'LL HAVE TO FIGHT TO GET OUT ALIVE!
THEY'RE CHARGING! ON EARTH, I'D CALL UPON MY FINNY FRIENDS FOR AID--BUT I'M SWIMMING SOLO HERE!
STILL, I NOW HAVE SOMETHING ELSE WORKING FOR ME--
--TELEARTHIC POWER, IN THE FORM OF "BAD VIBRATIONS"!
I AM AQUAMAN OF EARTH--KING OF THE SEVEN SEAS--MASTER OF ALL MARINE LIFE--CHAMPION OF JUSTICE!
A COUNTER-ATTACK FROM THE REAR--? NO--FRIENDS!
WE ARE HERE TO ASSIST YOU, AQUAMAN!
I "HEAR" YOU TALKING... PROFESSOR! LET'S ALL ...TURN ON...OUR VIBRATIONS!
7


HOWEVER TIME IS MEASURED IN VORTUMA, IT IS NOT LONG BEFORE THE LAND-MASTERS ARE DEFEATED, TOTALLY ROUTED BY AQUAMAN AND HIS COMPATRIOTS...
AND AFTER THE BATTLE ENDS, A SURPRISING DECLARATION FROM THE PROFESSOR-HEXAPUS!...
THE SELF-STYLED LAND-MASTERS ARE REALLY AQUATIC CREATURES OF VORTUMA! THEY MASQUERADED AS SURFACE-PEOPLE IN ORDER TO GAIN MASTERY OVER US!
AND NOW... I HAVE... A SURPRISE... FOR YOU!
ONE OF YOU... IS A TRAITOR... SECRETLY SERVING... THE LAND-MASTERS!
I AM SURE... THAT IS A PROBLEM... EASILY SOLVED! A MORE IMPORTANT PROBLEM--
--THE "BEAM"... WHICH BROUGHT ME HERE... HAS NOT YET... WORN OFF!
I MAY BE... MAROONED IN VORTUMA...
...THE REST OF... MY LIFE!
A PAIR OF PROBLEMS... WITH STARTLING SOLUTIONS-- NEXT ISSUE!
8



Dear Julius and Martin:

Just finished "If I Can't Be Clark Kent...Nobody Can" in *ACTION* #524 and was pleasantly surprised. At first I thought I wasn't going to like the story because the theme of the hero meeting his other identity has been overused; even the idea of the clone of the hero is old hat. But the way you handled it was great!

The point of it is, even though a clone is a copy of another human being, he is still a human being himself. And, as such, he is entitled to have his own identity like everyone else. The scene where the Kent clone pleads to be allowed to live the only identity he knows is most effective. The fact that he was a clone makes no difference because he was an exact duplicate and a difference that *makes* no difference *is* no difference. So who is really to say which of the two Clarks really has exclusive rights to the identity? *Superman* had as much right refusing to give it up as the clone had in demanding it.

Which raises another question: Did *Superman* really have the right to "force" the clone into another identity? True, the clone was seriously injured, but he had no say in who he would be. None of us would like to have another identity thrust upon us, so why should the clone be treated any differently? Think of the implications.

You touched the tip of the iceberg on a very controversial topic. I wish you had explored it further and maybe you will in the future. At any rate, thanks for a most thought-provoking tale.

KEN JANASZ
205 Linn
Leavenworth, KS

You state the case for the clone, Ken, but how would you feel in the shoes of the person cloned? Suppose someone came to you and said that you had to give up being who you were because the clone also had a right to the identity?—BR

*****

Dear Editor:

Ahhh, what a pleasure to see Martin Pasko back in *ACTION*! Marty is one of the best *Superman* writers that ever lived and I've always enjoyed his particular strong-willed version of the Man of Steel. The Pasko-*Superman* is one who is extremely defensive about things he cares for and this is quite evident in "If I Can't Be Clark Kent, Nobody Can!" *Superman*'s statement that he'd rather die than give up his Clark Kent persona was dramatic, but then, drama is what Marty does best.

A man without an identity is, indeed, a lonely man. This *Superman*-clone may not have an identity, but he did have *Superman*'s looks. Marty pulled a trick here; instead of having a *Superman* lookalike wanting to be the Man of Steel, he chose to live the quieter life of Clark Kent instead. Leave it to Marty Pasko to come up with such bizarre twists!

JOHN SCOTT
Boston, MA

*****

Dear Julie and Bob,

"Catastrophe By Calculation" was another Rozakis winner. *The Calculator* must be a favorite of yours and it's always a treat to see him up to no good. But what's going to happen when he gets immunity to all DC heroes?

JOHN ZUBER JR.
300 Camelot Drive
Athens, GA 30606

It should take him quite a long time to accomplish that, John...and by then I'll have thought of an answer to your question!—BR

*****

Dear Julie and Bob,

Believe it or not, I buy *ACTION COMICS* for the back-up features and #524's didn't let me down. I had looked forward to the *Atom/Air Wave* team-up for a while and have been following *AW* since his debut in *GREEN LANTERN* #100. He is one of my favorite heroes, possibly because his young age presents a nice change of pace from the older heroes and also makes him easier to identify with for younger readers. But I've got a couple of questions: In *ACTION* #488, it was said that *Air Wave* was 15; is he still 15? And wasn't this *AW*'s first team-up story since his days with *Green Lantern, Green Arrow* and *Black Canary*? How come he and *The Atom* seem to know each other?

MARK D. WELCH
134 Little John Road
Williamsburg, VA 23185

You may buy ACTION for the back-ups, Mark, but you apparently missed some issues. Air Wave and The Atom joined forces against the Red Dart and the Sunspotter in #'s 513 and 514 respectively. And, yes, Hal is still 15. Comic folk age a lot slower than the rest of us! (I started reading comics when I was younger than Superboy and now I'm older than Superman!)—Bob Rozakis